ISSUE 24 · SEPTEMBER 1989 · £1.50

ACE

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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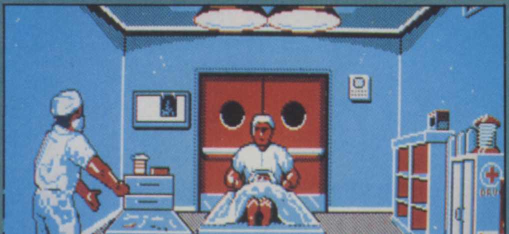

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Ultimate driving experience? PLUS: Hypergames, ST Blood Money, and the unique Sim City.

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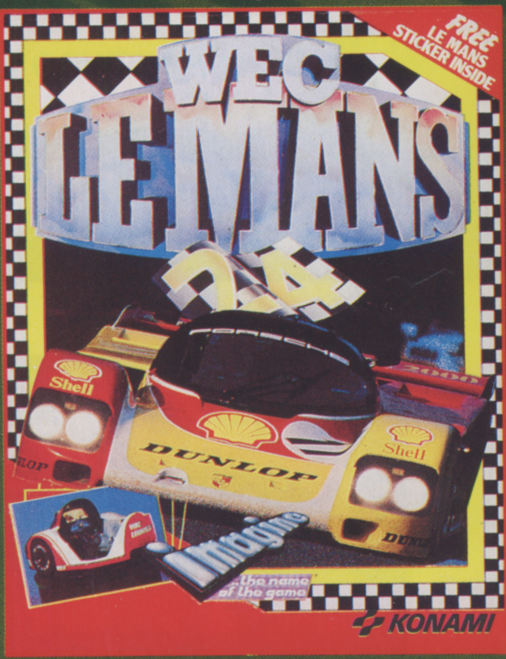
We celebrate our second anniversary by going back in time to the beginnings of electronic entertainment.

Marlboro
Shell
12
Shell

GO TO SPAIN!

Take a friend and get your own grandstand seats for the Spanish Grand Prix...absolutely FREE! See page 25.

→ → PLAYFUL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WEC LE MANS 24
Imagine ...the name of the game
KONAMI

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Wec Le Mans is not a game – it is the ultimate driving experience.

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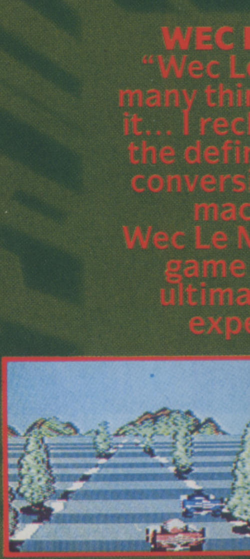

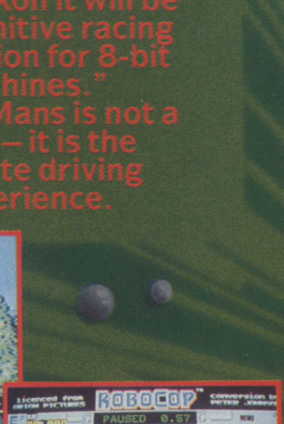
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conversion by PETER JOHNSON
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COMPUTER GAMESWEEK

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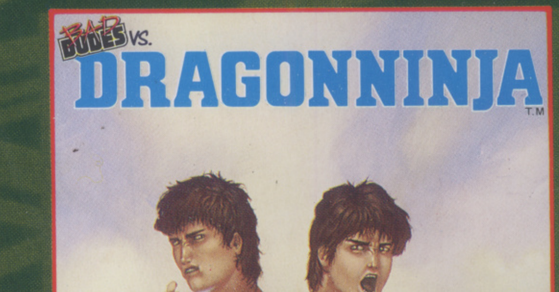
BAD DUDES VS.
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Imagine ...the name of the game
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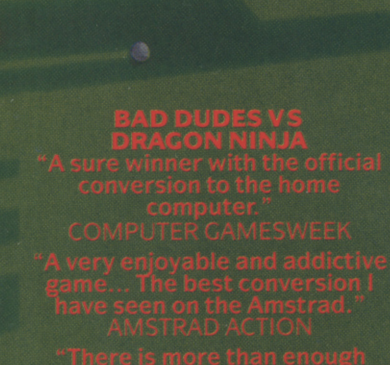

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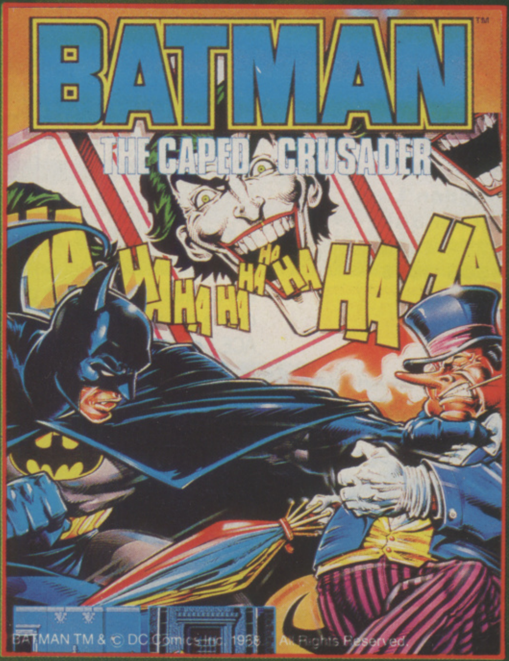

BATMAN
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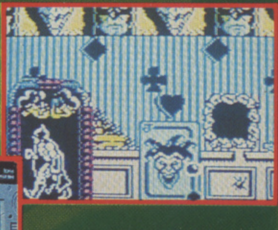

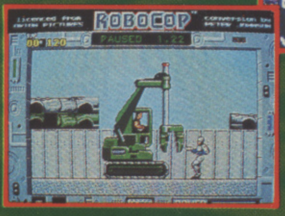

ROBOCOP
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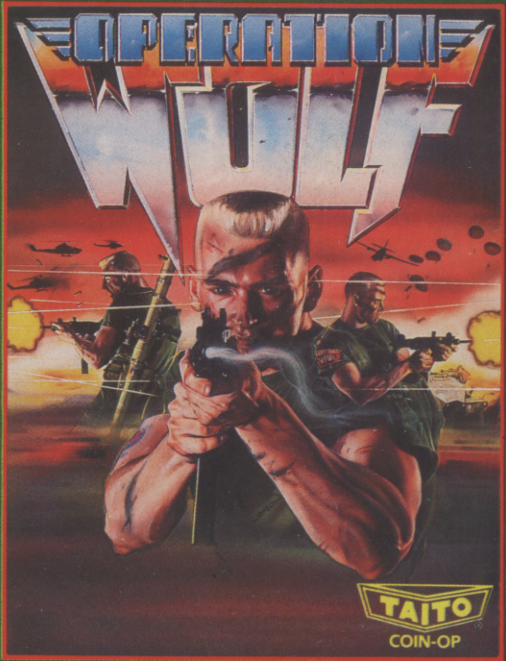

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SPECIALS

GAMEPLAY 2000 26

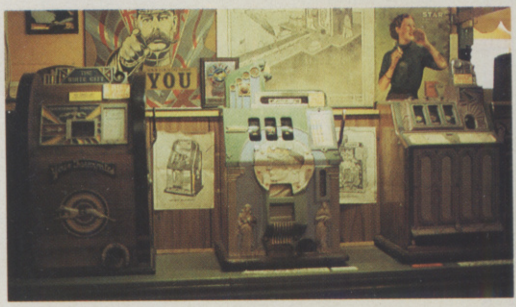
Philips, Sony, Panasonic, Technics – just a few of the big names who have collaborated on the world's first fully-featured CDI standard. It's due to hit the shops this Christmas – we report on the hardware specs, the software under development, and the potential of what could be the most powerful games system ever produced.

HYPERGAMES........................38

New software technologies are beginning to filter through to games programming. Does this mean the end of the shoot-em-up?

100 YEARS AGO 34

Exactly what did Great-Great-Uncle Ebenezer get up to in the arcades. Did he take pot shots at plastic Boers? Or did he get up to something just a little more...disgusting. ACE begins a three part examination of arcade game technology, starting with the days when *Pong* was what wafted up from under the Pier.



FLASHES OF INSPIRATION..30

Sometimes a new graphics or coding technique will give a programmer the idea for a whole new game. ACE takes an exclusive peek at some of Psygnosis' new games, and finds out that it's often the pixels that power the programmer's imagination.

MEGASOUNDS.......................71

...for a few notes. You don't need to spend a fortune to get stereo sound, CD-quality output, and lots of instruments playing simultaneously. We check out the peripherals that can put an orchestra in your bedroom for less than £350.

SCREEN TEST

Two great 900+ games this month, both superlative titles and essential buys for gamesters of all persuasions. You can also check out the beautifully animated Fiendish Freddie, and the hideously cute New Zealand Story, plus a host of other scorching late-summer releases.

ACE RATED

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Is 16-bit technology finally freeing games programmers from the limitations of conventional game types? ACE discovers a whole new world of game concepts, based on hypertext systems. See p30...

HYPERGAMES

Cosmic Osmo, which ACE featured last month, isn't just the world's biggest game, it's also one of the first to be created using a hypertext system, in this case Hypercard on the Apple Mac. For the first time since Pong, computer programmers and games players are about to be faced with a whole new gameplaying experience. And it's not only in software either – check out the formidable powers of the Philips CDI system on page 26.

GO TO SPAIN,

Accolade have produced some of the best racing sims around –

no

NOW WE ARE TWO!

What an issue to end our second year! Not only have we got full technical details of the new Philips/Sony CDI machine, but we've also managed to get our paws on Sim City, an extravagant urban simulation that pitches you into battle against flood, fire, earthquakes...and dinosaurs. But that's not all...

We're celebrating two years of games coverage with a look back at the very beginnings of electronic entertainment in the first of a three part series, and a look into the years ahead as we reveal the plans of US software house Cyan and details of the world's first hypergames – a new type of computer entertainment that could dominate the 1990's. It's all happening...and it's all here.

GAMEPLAY

SCREEN TEST 41
This month features one of the most varied and exciting Screen Test sections we've seen for a long time. Not only do we have the unbelievable *Sim City*, but we've also uncovered *Conflict Europe*, the incredible *Stunt Car*, and the only game with a pain in the lower abdomen: *Life and Death*.

ARCADE ACE 22
Willow, willow, wherefore art thou, *Willow*? In an arcade up the road, that's where, along with the superlative *Monaco Grand Prix*.

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FREE ISSUE!....................................32
At last, your chance to receive your very own letterbomb – the latest issue of ACE, delivered to you every month.

IN THE PINK!

The games you have to have, updated every month to include the latest essential buys from around the world, plus the ACE Crossword, puzzles, lists, readers' advertisements, all starting on page 87.

Aqua Ventura – an exclusive peek on page 30

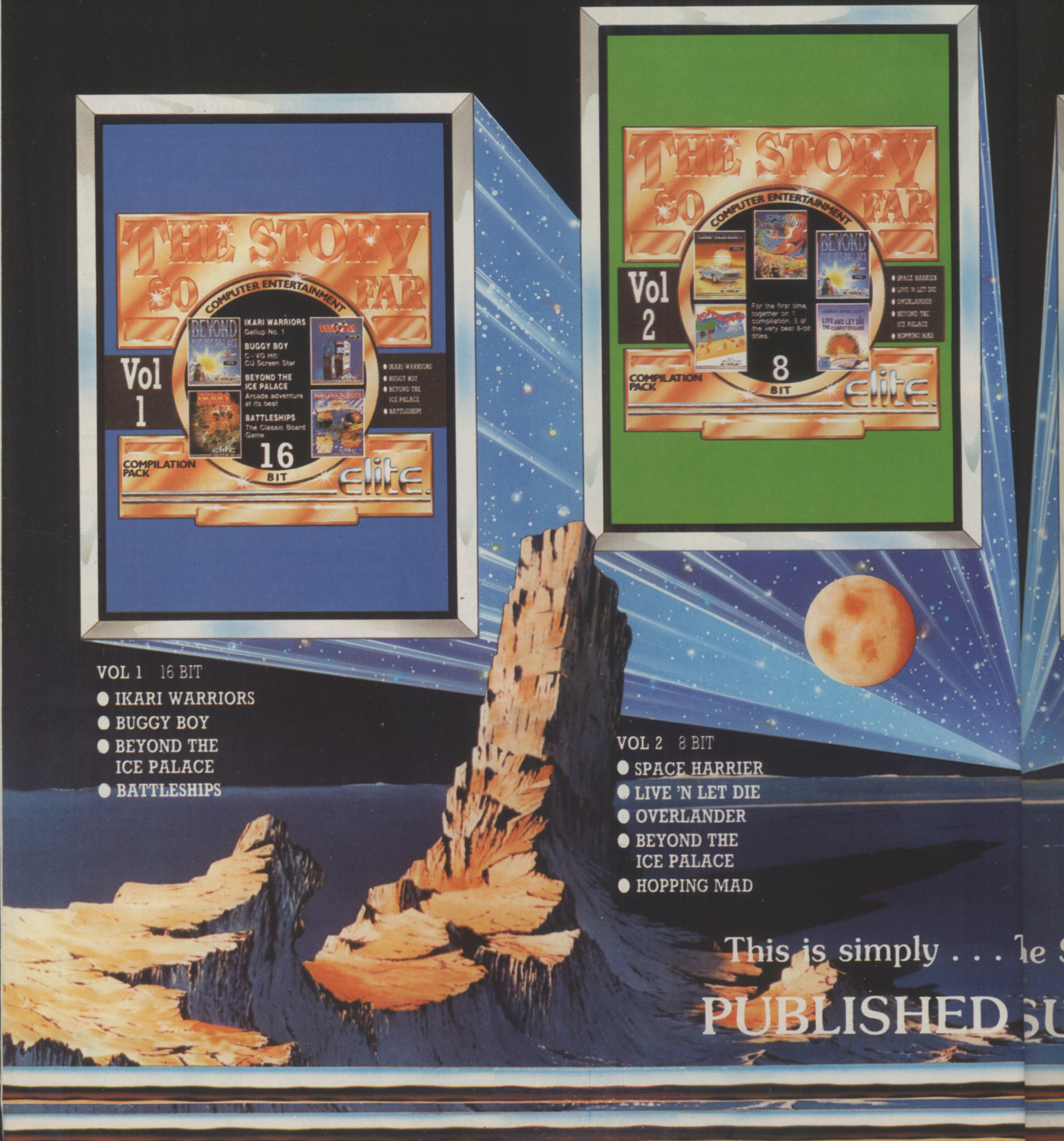
Sim City does for the town what Populous did for the world.

ABSOLUTELY FREE!

now they're giving you a unique chance to see the Spanish Grand Prix in Jerez – race to p25!

THE STORY S

Some of the hottest titles of recent month are
of an exciting new range of cmpi
All four will be available urin
with more Chapters planned for lter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BEYOND THE ICE PALACE
Arcade adventure at its best
BATTLESHIPS
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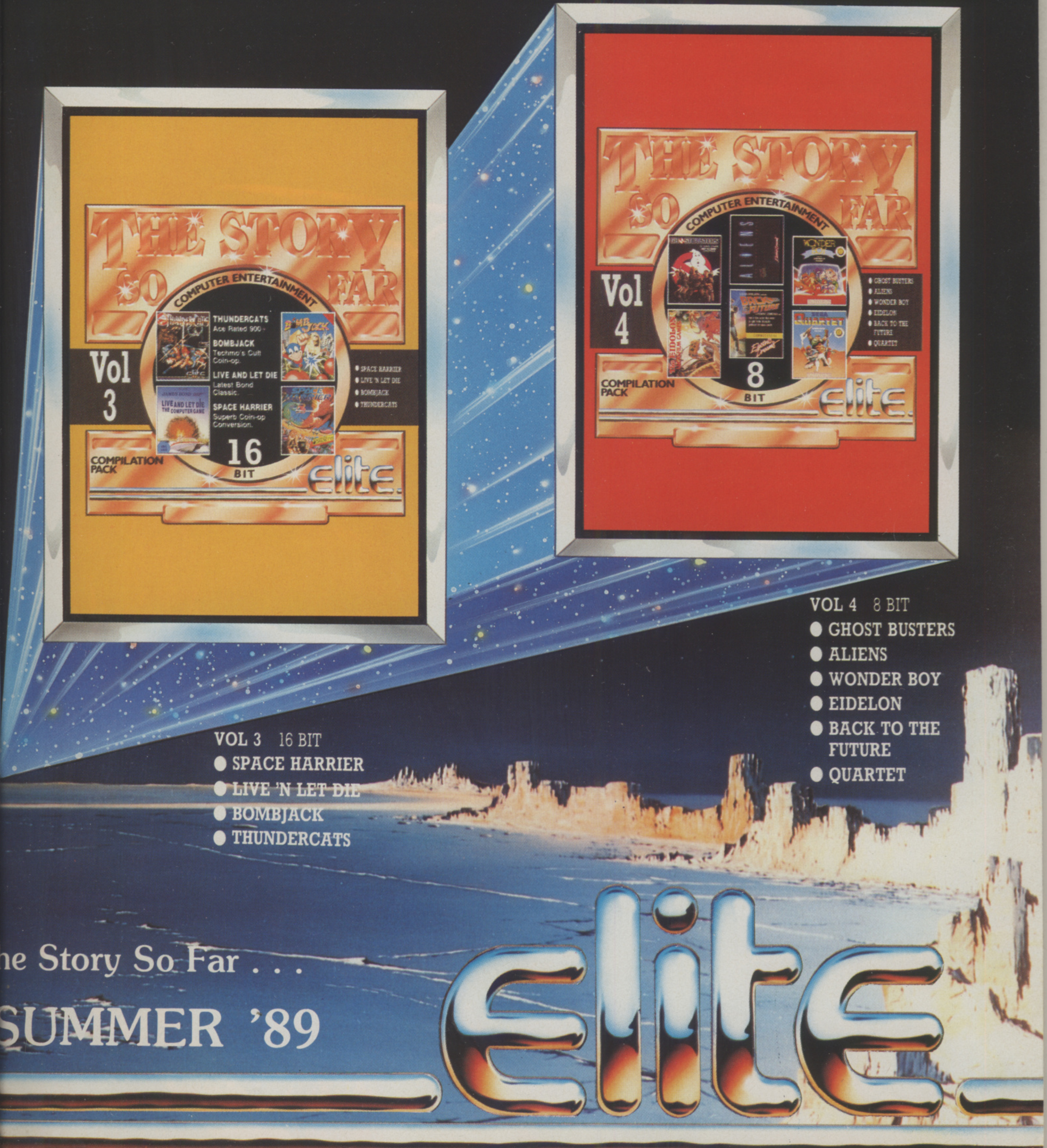
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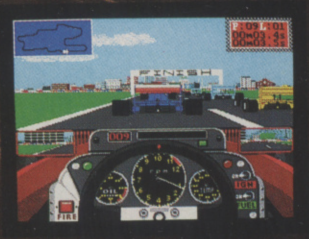
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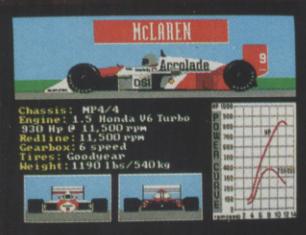
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ACE NEWS

KONIX TO BLITZ PC-SHOW.

Konix have booked an enormous stand at next months PC Show at Earls Court to launch there long awaited Multi System. This is the first time the public will get a chance to have a go on Konix - with its much written about hydraulic chair add-on.

Details of the Multi System were first announced in the March issue of ACE when Konix were predicting an August launch for their innovative machine.

In design terms the Konix is the most revolutionary console ever. Looking more like a deluxe joystick than a video games machine the Konix can adapt into three different modes - driving, motorbike, or aircraft. Underneath this slick exterior is an equally impressive computer - based on the Flare - from the same people who worked on the Spectrum.

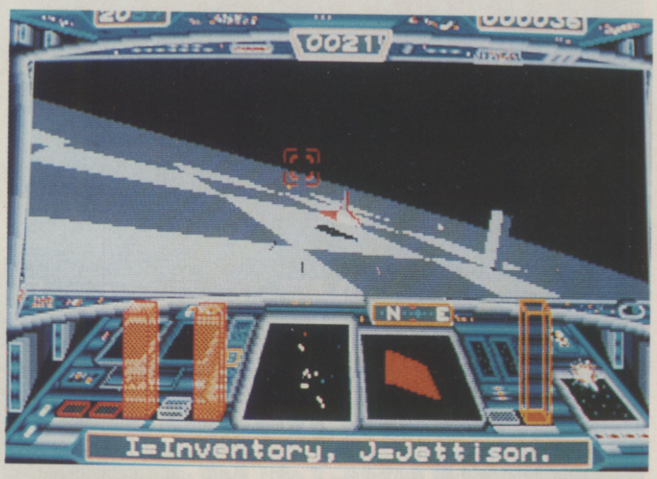
Konix hope to have a minimum of ten games available when the machine is launched. These will include *Starglider II* , *Run the Gauntlet*, *Sailling*, and an original game from Argonaut called *Bikers*. Jeff MInter is converting his *Attack of the Mutant Camels* game and original titles are also planned by Binary Deign - *Kotox* and *Hammer Fist*.

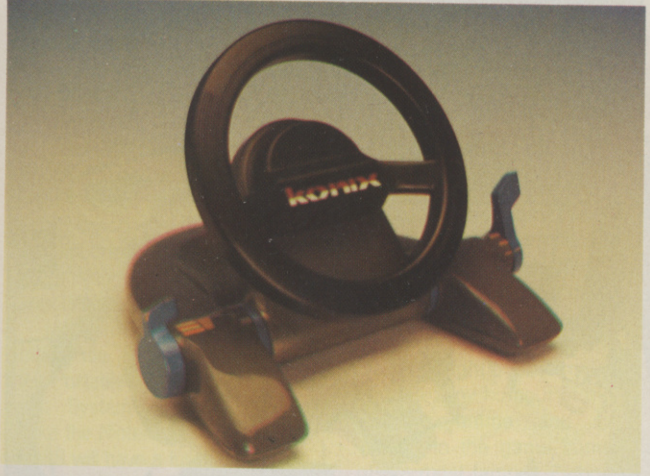
In the months since our exclusive peak at the Konix a lot has been happening at the South Wales development plant where the Multi System prototypes are being built. Most significantly a mysterious backer has come forward to make a vital cash injunction to the company. Konix boss, Wyn Holloway, is not saying who his backers are or how much they have put in - commenting to the press curtly that it was "enough".

Priced at £199 for the basic unit (the chair is extra) it will be available in the Toys R Us stores. Konix are expected to announce further multiple retail outlets for the Multi System at the PC show.

Meanwhile, Accolade are going 'sporty' at the PC Show to promote *Hard Ball II*. And ACE, of course, will be there on, close to the Nintendo stand.

You'll also be able to latch onto the US Gold mega-promo, featuring Michael Jackson paraphernalia.





Starglider II, soon to appear on the Konix console. Software developers have been raving about the machine for some time and there's no denying its powerful tech spec, based on the work done by Flare Technology and originally reported on exclusively in ACE. The PC Show will reveal all...

ACCOLADE IN ACTION

Accolade are marking their entry into the UK market with a large catalogue of varied games and a push for the older, more sophisticated games player. 'We have entered the market at just the right time... with PC software now selling at similar levels to the ST the Accolade range of games is ideally suited', said Nadia Singh, speaking for the company.

The London office will handle all European distribution of the Accolade range of games and also oversee their conversion to popular UK computer systems - such as the Spectrum and Amstrad.

The Accolade range is best known to UK gamerS for titles like *Hard Ball* and *Hard Drivin*. Several new titles are set for launch in the next two months including *Jack Nicklaus Golf*, *Fast Break* (a basketball sim for Amiga and PC), Eye of the Storm (a Vietnam Huey Sim), *Cycles* (a motor racing sim of a similar graphical quality to *Hard Drivin* and *Grand Prix Circuit*), *Heat Wave* (an Offshore Superboat Racing Sim) and a trio of role playing games - *Don't Go Alone*, *The Third Courier*, and the *Deadlock Files*. This is a pretty extraordinary spread of titles – from sports sims to RPG. The latter titles look particularly interesting and have some stunning graphics screens. Let's hope the gameplay matches up.

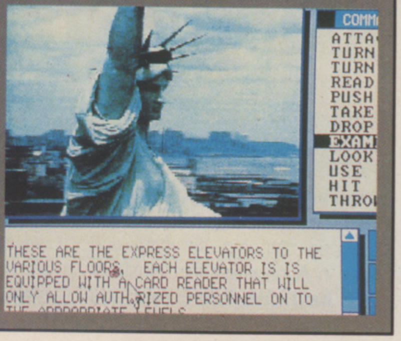
Several of the Accolade titles have won awards in the US for design and sales achievement. Accolade's move into Europe is further evidence of an American take-over of the UK software industry. Activision and Electronic Arts already account for a sizable chunk of UK software sales.

They were joined at the end of last year by Chicago's Mindscape and now Accolade join the pack.

On the plus side ,Accolade's UK staff were all hand picked from the British software industry. Boss Jane Cavanagh is a games business veteran - having worked formerly for Telecomsoft, Argus, and latterly for the Sales Curve. Marketing Manager - Nadia Singh used to handle PR for Commodore and a variety of software houses.

All Accolade games are produced first of all on the IBM PC and its compatibles and converted later to the Amiga, and ST.

Accolade's Deadlock adventure features digitised pics of New York.



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DISNEY COMPUTERISE ANIMATION

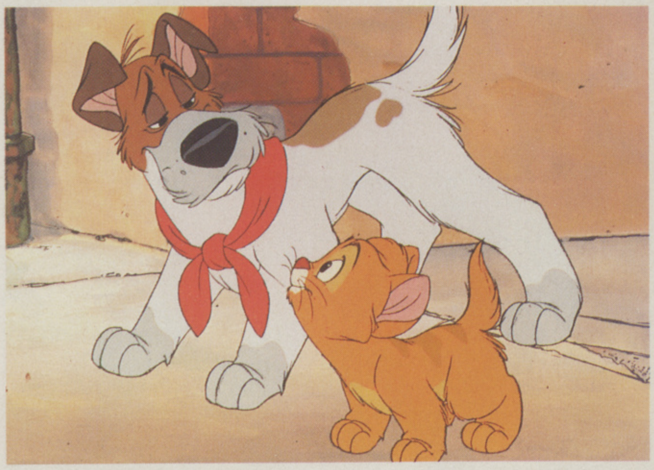
Walt Disney used state of the art computer animation techniques for the production of their Christmas blockbuster - Oliver and Company.

Computer generated animation was first seen in the 1982 film - Tron. Since then computer animation has become common place in TV commercials - last year's Commodore Amiga advertisement being a good example.

Disney's new system is much more powerful than the one used in Tron. It works in three dimensions - building a wire frame model of the object to be animated in the computer's memory. This is then drawn over using traditional cartoon animation techniques. Once the object is in the computers memory the producer can play around with it at will to consider several different angles for shots.

Oliver and Company blends the cartoon animation of the film with the computer graphics in a way that the film goer will never notice. Objects created and animated by computer include cars, buses, a piano, sunglasses, subway tunnels, trains, city scapes, and even an architect-perfect drawing of the Brooklyn bridge.

The film has a total of eleven minutes of computer generated graphics. Director George Scribner is delighted with the computer enhanced effects in the film " Because the city itself is in some respects another character in the picture , we wanted it to be realistic with lots of movement and traffic - not just static backgrounds. The computer has enabled us to generate the rhythm and action that goes with an urban centre and then animate the characters on top".

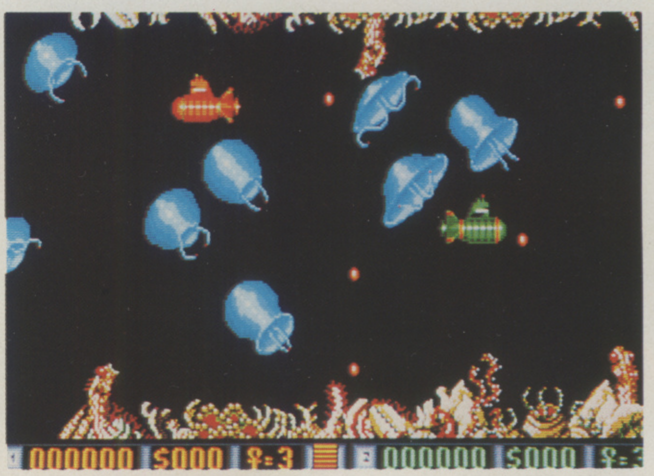


AMSTRAD'S HARD LUCK

Amstrad is recalling all versions of its PC2286 and PC2386 computers due to a problem in its hard disk.

The company had already stopped shipping the high end PC's in April whilst the unusually high hard disk failure rate was investigated.

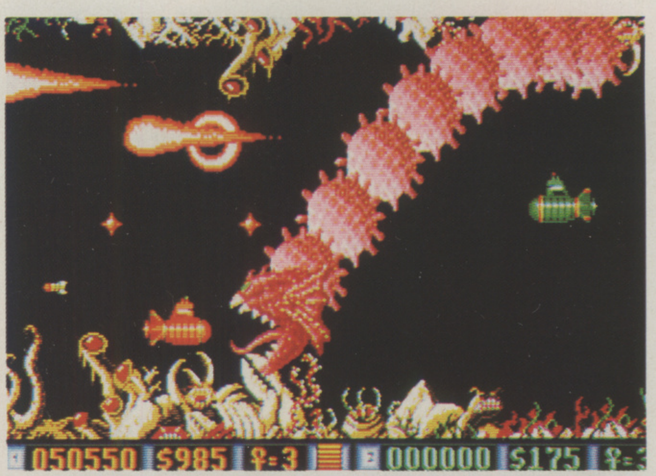
Amstrad are attempting to sell the recall of the machines as the move of a responsible manufacturer - and not a panic measure. Multi-millionaire boss of Amstrad , Alan Sugar, told the press "The hard disk failure rate, whilst low, is unacceptable to us, but rumours in the market suggest wholesale failure and we cannot allow our reputation as suppliers of reliable equipment to be damaged".



ST BLOOD MONEY

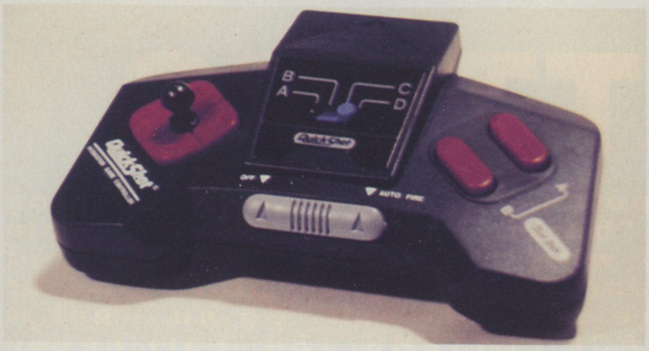
Who would have believed it? After struggling to squeeze Blood Money onto the Amiga, Psygnosis seem to have achieved the impossible by converting it onto the ST, losing almost nothing of the original scenario and presentation

the only real difference you'll notice on ST Blood Money is that the game plays slightly slowly, especially when there are a lot of aliens on screen. Purists may object to this, but the fact is that the original game was really pretty tough. The slightly extra margin for error you get in the new version makes it all a teensy-weensy bit easier. And, paradoxically, we reckon it's almost better than the original as a result.



DOM DOM TV

Dominic Wheatley and Mark Strachan prepare to be filmed for the latest edition of Action Screenplay. The video magazine features the Domark Story - in which the two upper crust entrepreneurs tell how they clawed their way to the top. The tape also features reviews and hints and tips on the latest games. Available from W H Smith for £4.99.



JOYSTICK POWER

Spectravideo launch their most sophisticated ophisticated joystick to date in teh shape of the - QS-118 Wizmaster..

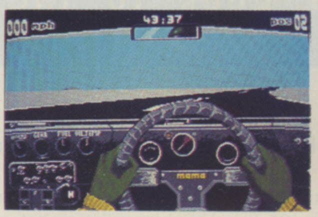
The joystick has a range of special features including push button finger and thumb control, two different sized levers, two fire buttons, auto fire switch and a computer system select button.

The Wizmasster will work with all popular home computer systems adn also offers an infra red remote control model for lucky Nntendo owners. The Wizmaster is in the shops now at £11.95 with the Nintendo version going on sale next month.

HAND HELDS TRICKLE IN

Hand held mania is beginning to take off - with the first batch of Nintendo Game Boy's appearing in certain import shops. These have been imported from America - an official shipment of Game Boy's expected later this year.

Meanwhile Atari are still putting the finishing touches to their Portable Computer Entertainment System (shown above). Unlike the Nintendo Game Boy the APCES will have a full colour liquid crystal display. Expect lots of publicity for these machines at the PC Show. Nintendo's Game Boy is currently a hot favourite in the ACE Advertising department.

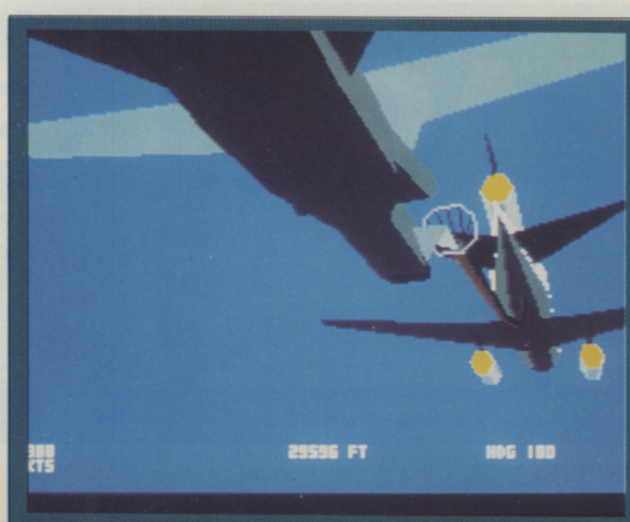


SOUPED-UP SIERRA COSWORTH SIM

Artronic claim to have gone up a gear in the increasingly competitive racing car simulation stakes.

Their *Fast Lane* game puts you at the cntrols of a Spice Engineering Sierra Cosworth powered racing car.

The object of *Fast Lane* is to win the World Championship against a top international field on famous tracks like Suzuka, The Nurburgring, Le Mans, Brands Hatch, Dijon, Jarama, and Spa Francorchamps. *Fast Lane* was coded for Atrtronic by a new programming team called The Attic.



ACTIVISION'S BOMBSHELL

Activision are putting the finishing touches to what looks like being an excellent flight simulation. Bomber features eight different bombers in a variety of manoeuvres - such as bombing SAM sites, refuelling in mid-air,and flying missions.

The action takes place at Ellesworth USAF base in Wyoming - with the missions being flown around its neighbouring states of Colorado, Nebraska,Utah, and Idaho.

The game was developed for Activision by Vector Graphics - programmers of Star Wars and the Empire Strikes Back.

The strength of Bomber is its 3-D Polygon rendering system. According to Vector this is far faster and smoother than in games like Falcon and Starglider II. Reviews should appear in issue 26.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Is nothing sacred? It would appear not where computer game rights are concerned as the Monty Python TV shows are the latest 'licensed property' to be converted to the computer screen.

Virgin Mastertronic are to launch the game early next year. The launch will coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the cult comedy programme.

Virgin have given Core Design a tight brief to maintain the zany humour of the TV programme and to include in the game some of the most famous Python sketches - such as the Ministry of Silly Walks and Parrot sketches.

ACE LETTERS

You are all wrong you know, Populous isn't the greatest thing since sliced bread. Infact its "boring" according to Robin Cannan. Peter Tuttle gets shirty with software houses for not supporting the good 'ol Archie and Alan Hughes picks up our Prize Letter for his plea for more software fun. Go on - get it off your chess by writing to ACE LETTERS, 34 Farringdon Lane, LONDON,EC1R 3AU. £25 goes to the author of our monthly Prize Letter.

IGNORING THE JONES'S

It's a familiar topic,but seemingly as popular as ever.Is an Archimdes better than a Spectrum , or an Amiga better than a 64?IN short, is any computer better than yours.

Surely the whole point is that the terms "better" or "worse" are wholly inappropriate - a computer may have a lerger memory,faster processor, or more colours, but if it fails to fulfill the purpose for ffor which it is intended, or fails to stimulate or educate the user as expected, it is "better" than nothing. A monitor that is switched off looks the same whatever computer it is connected to. A computer that is powered up day after day with the same enthusiasm is much more desirable to one that is gathering dust.

My C64 will never abe an Amiga, and its time at teh cutting edge of technology is long past./ But while it continues to give me pleasure and enjoyment, who cares? Good luck to those determined to push back the frontiers in the development of home computing - we all need you, but we don't have to keep up with you.

And now you must excuse me, because although there is some time yet until the next ACE publication date, theres more than enough life left in 'Bards Tale III' to keep me occupied.
Yours sincerely

R. Light

Point taken - if you want to be sure of enjoying Bard's Tale in the future though - you cannot bank on new versions always being made available for the trusty old C64.

Dear Sir
In the August issue Mike Welsh of Basildon says that games are too difficult for the users, and you cast scorn on this idea.

He is not the only one to feel like this, becfause I agree with him completely, and so do other people I have spoken to about it. I bought my ST three years ago for workd processing , but also started buying games with enthusiasm. However, when the uncompleted games , or ones only completed with the aid of tips and cheats, began to pile up on my shelf I became much more cautious. I only buy the occasional item, and then at the lowest cut price I can find. I am sure that this frustration and lack of a sense of value for money is one of the motives for all the copying and swapping which goes on, and also the extensive interest in cheats, infinite livesa, shortcuts and so on.

The reason is that so many games are too much hassle and take too long to complete. I want entertainment from a game not mind-breaking 'challenge' which has to become a way of life for weeks before it is completed.The list of games that were too much trouble for me include some of teh biggest and most hyped, such as Carrier Command, Menace, and Starglider I, and therefore I now distrust even the magazine reviews. After all, how many reviewers actually complete games which they have paid for, ratehr than play around with free review copies.

Games players generally will range from the lazy, such as mystelf, to teh fanatical who write into your pages with detailed tips which must have taken them a monumental amount of time and effort to produce.

Games designers are losing peopple like me at the lazy end of the market because they are too involved with the fanatics. Games are weighted too much against the player, with a reluctance to include such aids to game play as a save option, levels of difficulty, hint sheets, maps and infinite lives options. Even when an infinite lives option does exist, it seems only to be for the convenience for the programmer and is not revealed until some hacker finds it.

It is no surprise therefore, that there is such a large demand for cheats and tips. The DungeonMaster Editor is anexample of what is required, but even this was produced by a third party. Before I obtained this I had abandoned Dungeon Master becasue it was far too much hassle to map all teh mazes and find the keys, but with the aid of the Editor I was able to get a lot of fun from the game. Anotehr game with which I had fun was Silent Service, because it had several levels of play, from easy to difficult.

Yes - fun! Games designers are so concerned with creating weirs and wonderful challengesthat they have forgotten what the word fun means.In doing so they are making people like myself lose interest.

I do not think, as Mike Welsh does , that this is because games designers are trying to make people buy more games before they have finished teh ones they already own. In my view it is because designers have become too involved in designing for its own sake - losing sight of the makret as a whole. Why not run a survey in ACE on this subject, so that games designers can take heed , and cater more than they do at teh moment for all sections of the market. If you can bring this messafge home to them you will be helping to put the fun back into games and doing a favour to teh whole market.

Alan Hughes
Milton Keynes.

Any software houses care to answer this one? At ACE we believe that advanced computer entertainment needs sophisticated instruction manuals - and that the back up sevices provided by some software houses is totally innadiquate. We do not necessarilly believe however, that games are too difficult. Its just the instructions - both on screen and on paper-do not receive nearly as much time and effort as the software itself.This has been the downfall of many excellent games.

PRIZE LETTER

Dear Sirs,
Please could you print a few columns on the economics of producing first rate games? I'm thinking here of things like Populous,Carrier Command, and Voyager.

As an owner of an Archimedes obviously didn't make my choice of computer on the basis of the fabulous games that I expected would be produced. At least this what I tell my sniggering , Amiga owning, frineds. After the release of Zarch and Conqueror, Superior Software seemed to Isoe heart since there have been no original Archimedes games from the company most closely associated with the Acorn machines. Games from other sources have tended to be simple two dimensional affaris cobbled together in bedrooms after school, or adventures easily ported over from other formats to squeeze the last pennies from old ideas. There have been various hints of a version Starglider II, which havee come to nothing, and 3D Pool, which may have been lost with Telecomsoft, but little else that I have found.

I have a horrible suspicion that unless a game can be coded in 68000 assembler or a compiled language like 'C' it dosen't get past the accountant. Games no longer seem to sell by reputation and quality but rely on very expensive promotion and release on every commonly
availlable format. On this basis the original Acornsoft version of Elite would have died at birth.

I know that the Archimedes games market is small at the moment becasuse relatively few machines have been sold to home users, but momentum is gathering(he typed
optimistically). Three years ago a PC conversion of anythjing other than a text only adventure would not have been considered.

Software companies are modelled on Tesco'sa rather than Oxfam, but even Tesco's have loss leaders. If one company cornered the market perhaps others would follow to cut in on the perceived potential for extra profit. With the introduction of the A3000 and the large numbers of users who will replace their old BBC Micros with the new model I hope a marketing manager somewhere will stop fondling his spreadsheet and start cajoling all the in-house code freaks he can find to learn ARM Assembler.
Yours sincerely

Peter Tuttle

3D Pool is being converted for the Archie and it looks fabulous. Far better than the Amiga and ST renditions.We know that software houses are looking at the A3000 and,if it achieves any respectable market penetration, there will be no shortage of designers and programmers ready and willing to work on the dream machine.

Yes, its another deity here. Here on cloud eight(Very pleasent but them upstairs seem to be having even more fun!) I've been thinking. Populous seems to have got at least nine and a half or 95% or 950 in every magazine. Naturally I bought it . Three hours of solid playing went by and then I thought, hey,this is boring! Everyuone seems to have missed that the game is virtually identical on every level. No variety whatsoever. The computer does not improve anywhere near fast enough and on the first few worlds you can just leave teh game and still win.

God of Style
(alias Robin Cannan)
Manchester.

I am writing in reply to the letter about linking two ST's together with a serial cable or a "datalink" cable.

I made a two metre long datalink cable after buyuing Powerdrome. My friend brought his ST around to mine and we had a game of Powerdrome against each other. Then Populous was released which also supported datalinking. We then had the idea to make a huge datalink cable to go between our houses (we live next door to each other!). WE bought a 30 metre cable from Tandy and connected plugs to it. It worked very well and is still working now. We also played Falcon with this cable.
Also,in the Christmas issue , someone wanted to have peripherals made in outrageous colours. No way would I have a red printer or a purple monitor plugged into my ST. If this ever did happen I would definitely paint them grey again. I do hope that person didn't paint his Amiga neon yellow with black stripes.

On a seperate issuee, I have sent in at least five cheats for games into ACE.None have ever been printed. I am now going to send them into ST/Amiga Format. Furthermore, why did the ACE CARD competition stop? I got an ACE CARD about six months ago and the competition only lasted about another twomonths. I have never won any competitions and I hoped I would win something in the ACE CARD competition, but it finished before I even got a chance.

J.P.Boggis

PS Level 122 of Populous is called VERYQUEER and is almost impossible.

I am afraid we cannot agree with you on the subject of wacky colours for peripherals. A quick straw poll of the ACE office shows the boys very much in favour of wacky colours for computers - with pink leopard skin the
favourite colour to brighten up our dull grey Mac's and PC's. By the way, I wouldn't recomend sending anything to ST/AMIGA FORMAT as this magazine no longer exists.

Dear ACE,
In the last few issue you have waxed lyrical about the Atari Portable Entertainment System, high definition TV, CD Interactive entertainment systems, games consoles such as the PC Engine copmplete (of course) with its CD Rom add-on, Macintosh games , £1 a throw coin-op games and the usual dozens and dozens of games that you simply "cannot live without". I would just like to say do you think we were born yesterday. If we were to buy all of things you are always going on about most of us wouldn't have any money left to buy food. I have no objection to your writers getting excited about the games and new computers that they see. I would probably get pretty excited myself if I were an ACE reviewer having privileged glimpses at all these things. Couldn't you just tone it down a bit though. After all we are not all made of money.

Hamish Grunter
Glasgow.

OK Hamish we'll try to tone it down next month especially for you you so don't forget to be at your news agents on the 7th of Oct with£1.50 in your hand

SEGA GAMES UDER RATED

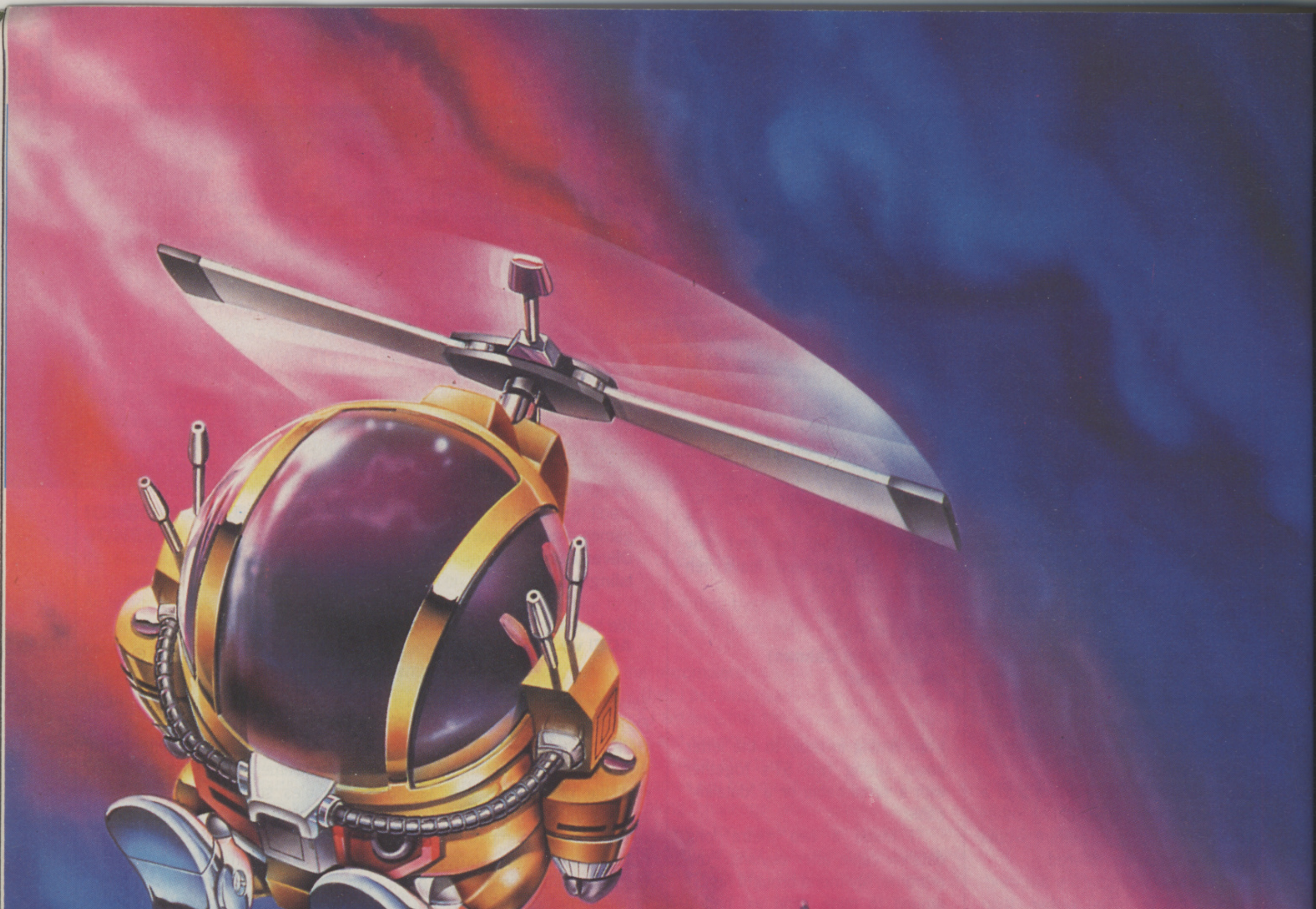
Dear Ace,
I am the proud owner of a SEGA and have been pleased to see that ACE has been reviewing games forthe Entertainment System in the last few months. What I cannot understand is why none of these games are ever ACE rated. OK so the SEGA may not have as flashy hi-res graphics as the Amiga and the ST but in the playability department Sega games are in a classs of their own. My friend owns an Amiga and I have played Microprose Soccer with him - but even he admits that it is not a patch on SEGA International Soccer. Thre is also the case of Thunderblade - far superior to any of the USG conversions for any computer you care to mention. What's more you don't have to wait for ages for the latest Sega coin-op games to be converted to the Sega as it is produced by the same company. You can therefore get games like Altered Beast, Shinobi and Galaxy Force already. So come on ACE how about giving the SEGA the credit it deserves and bunging in a few ACE rated reviews. The games are easily worth it.
Oliver Cary,
Islington.

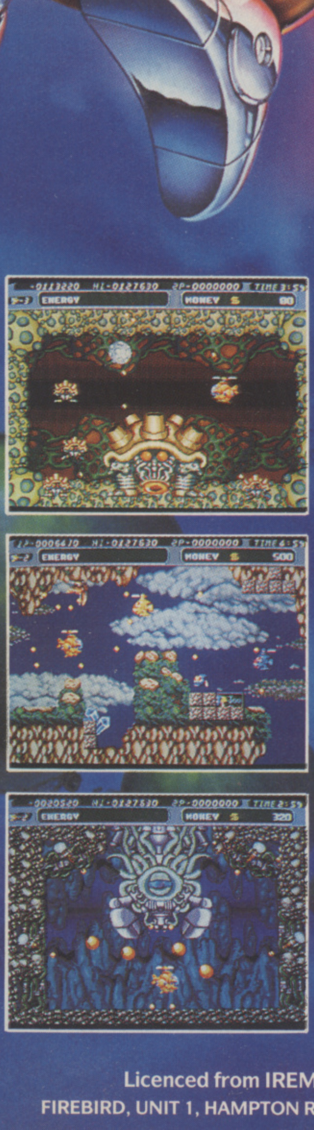
We have big plans for the Sega Oliver, so don't dispair.
ACEI wi

NEXT MONTH....

Issue 25 on sale September 7th.

- **First peeps at the software running on teh Konix Multi System, and also some of teh games for The Sony/Philips CD-I system revealed on page 26 of this issue.**
- **Part II of our HIistory of Coin-op Gaming takes us up to Pong and the Space Invaders Boom.We take the lid off 100 years of arcade gaming – find out just what it**
- **PC Show preview, stacks of games reviews,and a super competition.**





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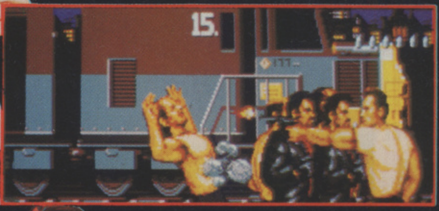

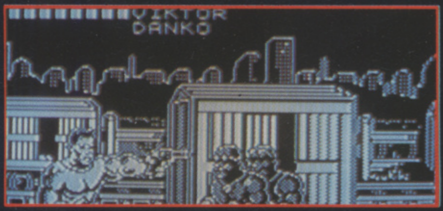

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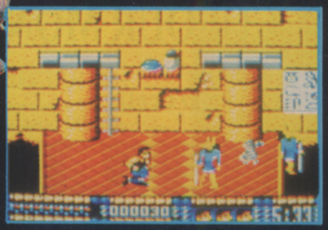

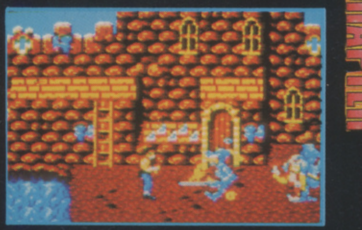

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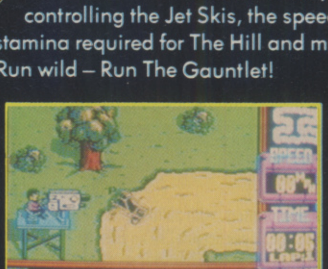

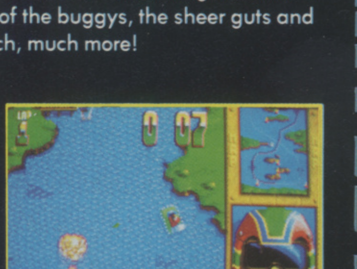

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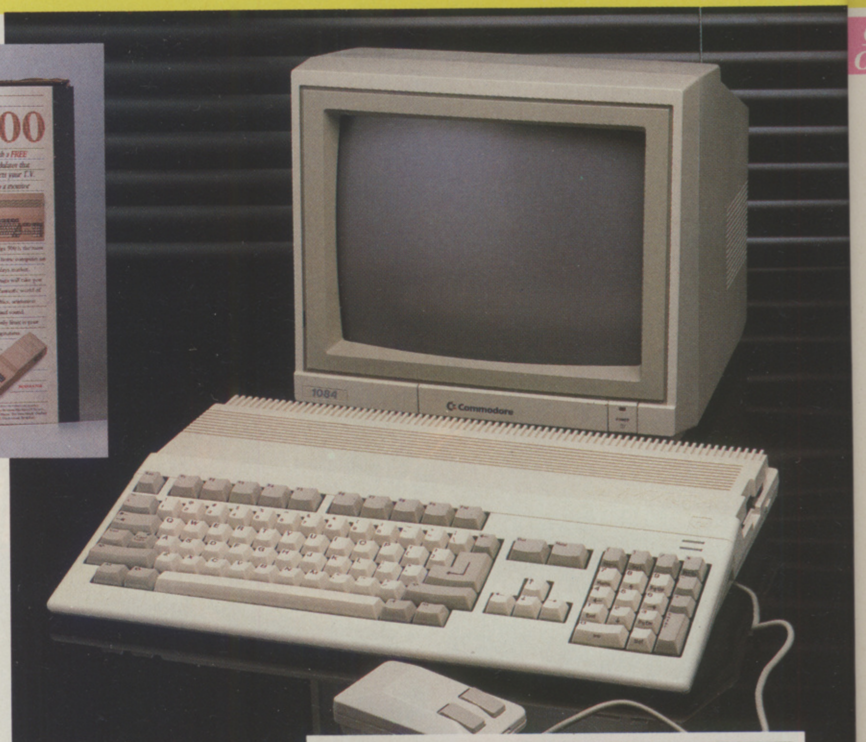

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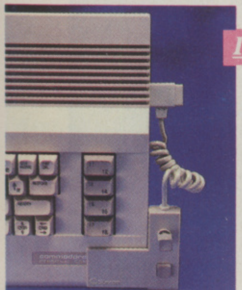

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HANDS ON!

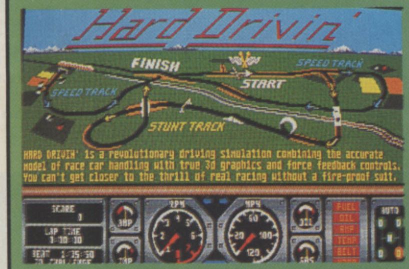
OLD GROPER GETS HIS PAWS ON THE LATEST TITLES...

Welcome to ACE's new 'previews section'. We decided that the games world needed something just a little harder hitting than the usual run of screenshots and shouts of glee about forthcoming titles. What we needed, we reckoned, was a bit of taste, a touch of discrimination...so we brought in Old Groper. Gropey knows a good game when he sees one – and he sees most of them before anybody else. Here's his report on this month's hotties...

Over the years, Domark supremos Mark Stracken and Dominic Wheatley have taken quite a bit of stick from, well, just about everyone I can think of I suppose. 'Silly Buggers', 'Upper Class Twits' are the two most repeated (and repeatable!) epithets attached to these guys, but that hasn't stopped their company making a lot of money over the years. How come?

To start with, the Dom-Dom's aren't as bad

HARD DRIVIN' HARD HYPIN'



HARD DRIVIN' is a revolutionary driving simulation combining the accurate model of race car handling with true 3d graphics and force feedback controls. You can't get closer to the thrill of real racing without a fire-proof suit.

You'll have seen a lot of pictures of *Hard Drivin'*, Domark's other bid for Christmas Fame, knocking around a lot of other mags. And even more hype about how good it is.

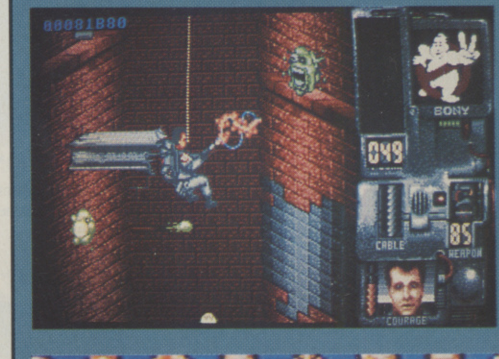
Thing is, as of right now, it only exists as a running demo of around 15 seconds long, with two complex shapes in - and that's yer lot. The man on the case, Jurgen Friedrich, is certainly a more than competent programmer and hopes to get around the same speed as the coin-op on the finished 16-Bit versions (quite an achievement if you consider the original has two 68000's plus a cartload of custom goodies), but there's a long way to go yet between now and the finished game. Watch this slightly less hysterically enthusiastic space as it happens, in the real world.

COIN-OP KRAZY

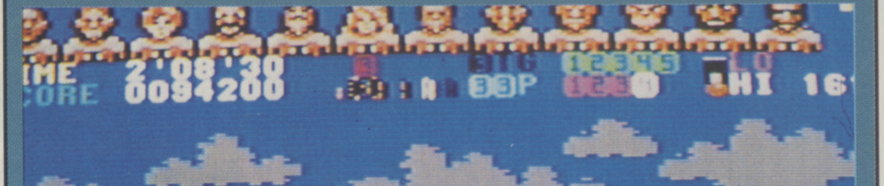
There are only 120 shopping days 'till Christmas. More's the point, there's only 2240 odd programming hours 'till the games have to be in the shops so that Gran/Mum/The Wife (delete where applicable) can get you the right prezzy. That statistic'll cause a few white hairs to grow, I can tell you. Still, the big licences are up and running for the Festive Season and they are: from Activision, *Ghostbusters II* and *Power Drift*. Two very big titles that have to be contenders for that elusive Christmas No.1. Domark hope to be there with *Hard Drivin'* and who knows, they might be right. US Gold and Ocean aren't going to let it go that easily...

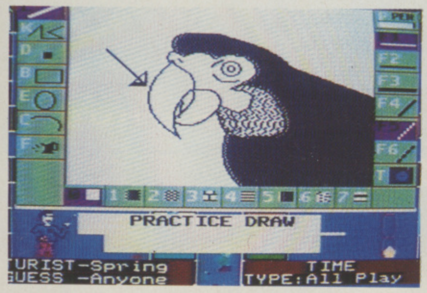
But....will the games be as good as the names? Let's hope so, or Santa might want be drop his awful revenge on the perpetrators. And it's a terrible job to clean reindeer shit off Gucci shoes........

Down a sewer in Ghostbusters II.



Power Drift on the C64





Pictionary from the Dom-Doms.

as they're painted. More importantly, in a market full of people too often looking up their own and other peoples' bottoms for ideas, the Dom-Doms can take a step back and decide to check out an idea that another 'better informed' publisher might turn down - and then go for it.

Most interesting right now is the announcement that Domark have picked up the licence for the board game **Pictionary.** Now *Pictionary* is a simple enough idea - you go around a board, land on whatever square and a nominated team member is given a word or concept to sketch for his or her companions, within a strict time limit.

Yuk, correct, it's one of those things that promotes social and humorous interactions within a familial or peer group setting. It also happens to be, unexpectedly for us cynics, great fun. Produced by Serif Games, the same company that did *Trivial Pursuit*, it has been very successful as a board game, but on a computer????

What can I say? All the initial indications are that it works very well indeed. A simple board, upon which a window opens at the appropriate time (pulled down by a flying Toulouse Lautrec...not the thing he was most famous for) to reveal a simple drawing package. Instead of using a sketch pad - you use the screen.

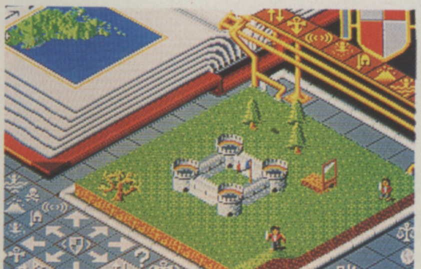
Even better, there is a single player version where the computer will draw pictures for you, while you have to guess the answer. My guess is that this one is going to be different enough to interest a lot of people - and it'll be out on all formats around the time of the PC Show.

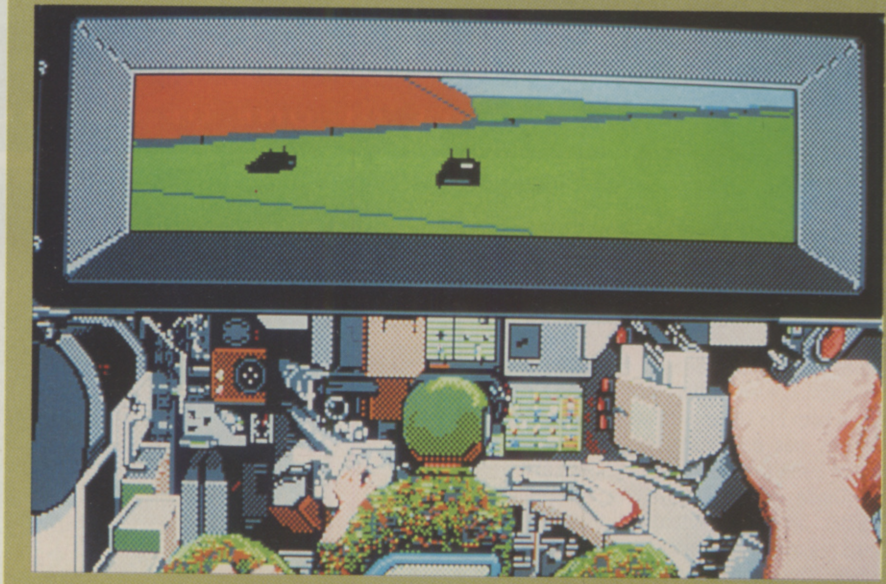
POPULATION GROWTH

Talking of *Populous* (which I was at some point) isn't it awesome - particularly when you play it linking two machines together? 'Take that, Dog-Breath - double Volcano to the Heartlands!' So much more satisfying than a conventional knee to the groin.

If you're tired of the original (or have finished, you Mega-being you) there is now an expansion disc that will give you new worlds, peoples and strategies to conquer. Thank you EA. Now That's What I Call Software.....

Brave new worlds for *Populous*...





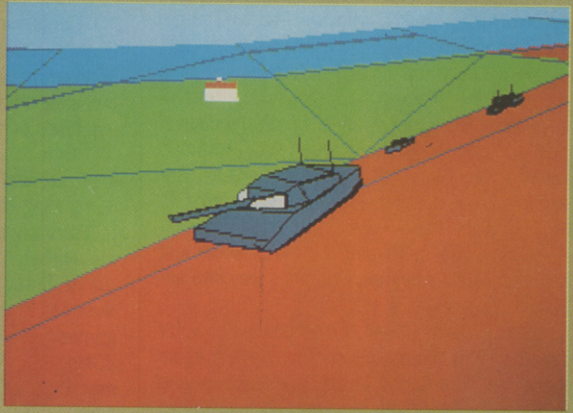
TANKS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES

After the shock of 16-Bit Carrier, sexy 3-D polygons are now an excepted part of the scene - and there's some great stuff on the brink.

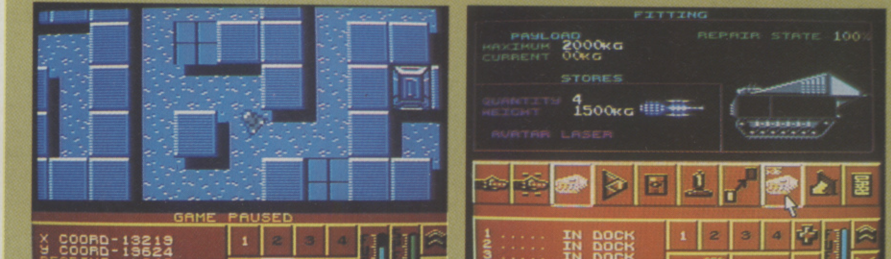
Sometimes, things you think might be easy, are in fact quite difficult. Such as representing contoured slopes in a 3-D world - rather than simple pyramids. Over at Spectrum Holobyte, they've cracked it, however - as you can see.

Holobyte's follow-up to Falcon, Tank is already shaping up to be as great a simulation as the former, playing at tank, platoon or company level. It's hoped that the finished thing could be networked with its elder brother too, so you could have a mate overfly enemy positions for you, or alternatively try to blow you up! No wonder they call them part of the Electronic Battlefield Series.

It would have been nice to show a UK contender to Tank, but Microprose don't want anyone to see Realtime's Tank Command yet. Can't possibly be anything to do with them having their own in-house 3-D tank game coming out later this year, natch. How about Carrier Command on the C64, 'though? No 3-D, but a top down, 8-way scrolling view of the action, with the same gameplay. Could be interesting.



Work is going on apace on another Leeds based 3-D product, 'though - Bomber programmed by Vektor. Published by Activision later this year, that really looks another class air combat simulator - pitched between Falcon and Jet Fighter in the complexity/playability stakes. Looking good.



Carrier Command on the C64 – a clever conversion that features all of the strategy but one less visual dimension. We reckon they made the right choice in not trying to capture the entire performance – a losing battle if ever there was one.

PSYGNOSIS

AN ON-THE-ROAD PROFILE OF ONE OF OUR TOP SOFTWARE HOUSES

Remember when the Atari ST was still a twinkle in most gamesplayers' eyes? Launched in the States, it was the starting point for a Liverpool company who were the first in Britain to concentrate exclusively on 16-bit products.

They've come a long way since Brataccas – their first game, released on the ST before the machine even hit the UK, it caused a sensation in both the US and Britain. Their next great success was Barbarian, released in the summer of 1986 simultaneously on Amiga and ST.

'Those were the days,' recalls company founder Ian Hetherington. 'At that time you could release simultaneously on the ST and the Amiga. The products were virtually identical apart from the 32 colours we had on the Amiga screen. Everyone was down-rating the Amiga, however, because of the situation, and saying how the machine was suffering from games being 'written down' for ST compatibility. We took a look at the Amiga, liked what we say, and decided to give it special attention.'

The result was a series of exceptional technical achievements, starting with Barbarian, moving through Blood Money, and ending up with the soon-to-be-released Beast.

Beast represents a 100% Amiga programming effort. It comes on two disks with custom loading routines giving 1040K per disk. Not only that, but all the files are compressed by around 37%. The product makes full use of the 1Mbyte Amiga to reduce disk access.

Beast is a typical Psygnosis product in that the company generate their titles first and foremost through technical, rather than story-line, innovation. This gives them a big advantage over software houses who are tied by license agreements to both expensive royalties and awkward scenarios. 'We're determined to stay ahead of the market in programming terms,' says Ian. 'By concentrating on the technical side we can really liberate our programmer's imagination. Many of our game ideas are sparked off by technical innovation.' There's no arguing with that – we've got exclusive previews on page s 30 and 31 which show just how technical innovation works it's way into silicon.

Shortly after their formation, bizz whizz Jonathan Ellis joined the company. Here again there are differences between Psygnosis and some of the other independents – the business side and the programming side are kept entirely separate – and it's the programming boys who get first say. 'I dont' even play the games,' moans Jonathan, 'I never have time.' He's too busy maintaining his reputation as a hard line negotiator with packaging suppliers and distributors to get his hands on a joystick.

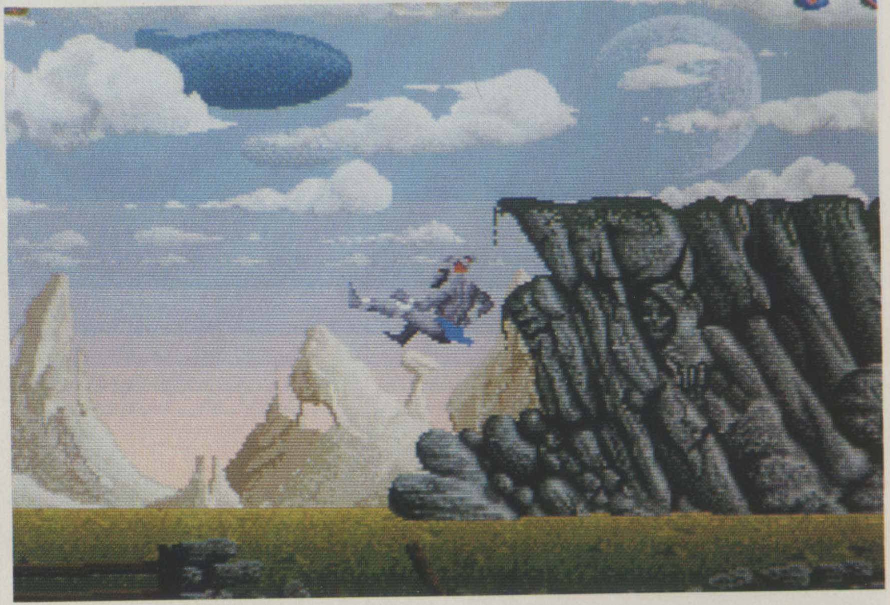
One reason why Psygnosis have been around, and successful, for so long, is the fact that they spend very little money on themselves or their offices. The company only recently moved from a small suite of rooms hidden away upstairs in a steelworks on Liverpool's dockside. Now they're established just down the road in a new building overlooking the port. 'We reckon we pay less for this space than most people in the south pay for their car parking. I t means we can spend more on the product, and in the long run that's the only thing that's going to keep us going. As soon as you start spending tons of money on building a flashy image, you stop spending it on programming,' says Jonathan. Ian, as programming supremo, is obviously in agreement: 'We have only one objective: technical excellence. And it costs a bomb...'

Costs include an extremely powerful 25Mhz PC network that links all the in-house programmers together and enables them to cross-assemble code for any of their target machines on the one development system.

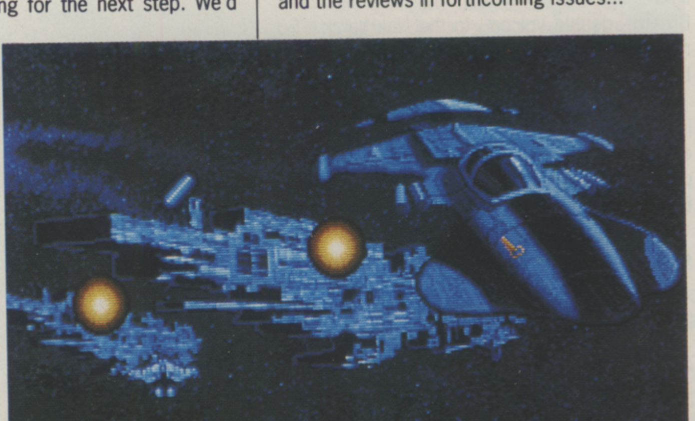
As for the future, Ian reckons the company are reaching the point where they will be demanding more powerful hardware if they are to carry on their technical pilgrimage towards the ultimate arcade game. 'In a way,' says Ian, 'we're already looking for the next step. We'd like to write games for 30Mhz VGA machines, or for some of the higher-spec consoles, but at the moment the markets just aren't there. We need machines that will allow us to take the graphical element much further.'

The trouble is that although both Atari and Commodore are always announcing continual upgrades to their products, the software boys are also racing to stay ahead. 'We need 256 colours on-screen, with a resolution of 640*400,' says Ian. 'So far the upgrades for the popular machines just can't reach that target. We'd love to write for the Archie but we feel better sticking with Amiga where we know there are enough people out there to buy the games to fund the development.'

Meanwhile, Psygnosis are facing a great period of change as they move towards creating more titles than ever before. You can check out some of these on pages 30 and 31. 'The objective in each release', says Ian, 'is simple. It's either got to be technically 100%, or even 110%. Alternatively, it's got to present an originality and playability that will make it an essential purchase.' Check out the screenshots – and the reviews in forthcoming issues...



***Beast of the Necropolis* is due out shortly from Psygnosis. Apart from the astonishing parallax scroling (which we can't show here!) you also get 900K of music – more than in the AfterBurner and Thunderblade arcade machines put together!**



The struggle for excellence: disappointed with hand-drawn graphics, Psygnosis actually built a model of this space ship and digitised it for the introduction to Aqua Ventura.

XENON 2

MEGABLAST

XENON II: MEGABLAST

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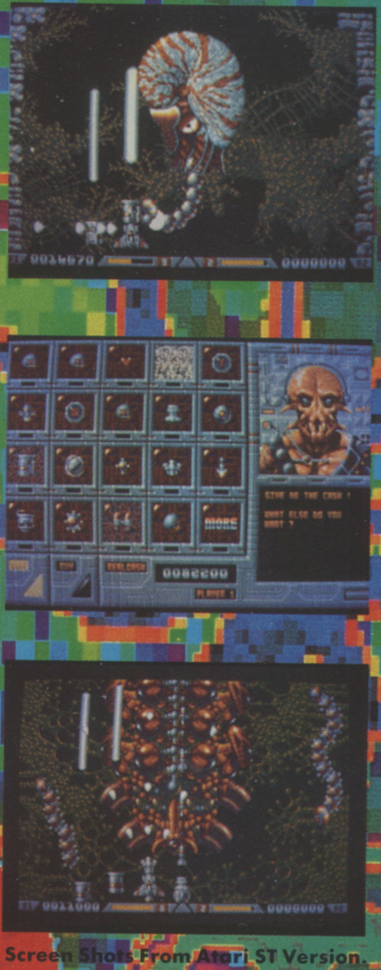
XENON II: it's out of this world!

XENON II: it's a Megablast!

XENON II: it's a Bitmap Brothers game!

Available Soon on Atari ST, AMIGA & PC.



GIVE ME THE CASH !

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT ?

Screen Shots From Atari ST Version.

image works

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MEGABLAST written by Tim Simenon
Produced by Simenon/Gabriel
Appears courtesy of Rhythm King Records
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RHYTHM KING

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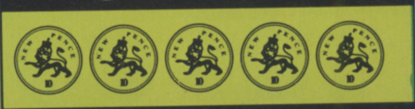
IS SEGA'S LATEST MEGA RACER WORTH 50 PFENNIGS, WE WONDER?

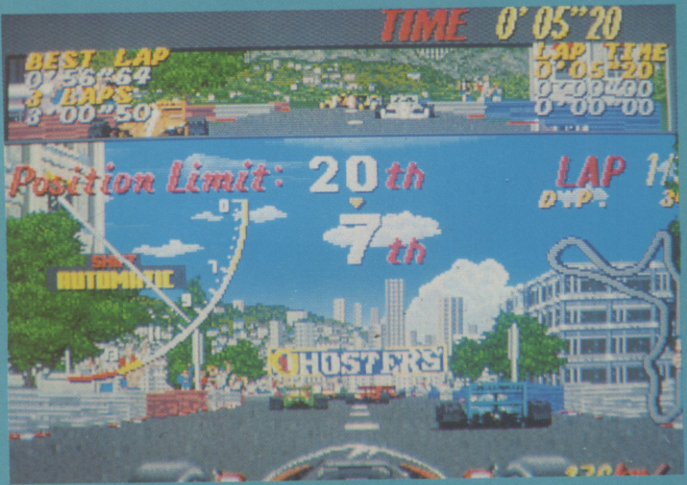
SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX

Sega



What a difference seven years makes. Then Sega gave us Monaco Grand Prix, a four colour, top-down view of some blocky UDGs (or so it looked like) that was supposed to be 'simulating' a Formula One race. Chortle, chortle, suppressed mirth, Murray Walker come back all is forgiven, etc.

In 19089 the corporate face of Sega Inc must be wearing a very smug grin indeed, because Super Monaco Grand Prix is everything the original wasn't – a total sensory overload experience that will convey you, for a few short/long minutes, from a gloomy British arcade into the atmosphere of glamour, thrills and spills that is world of Formula One.



The race is on – smell that burning rubber!

Sit in the unit and the only thing that seems to be missing are a four point harness and a fire extinguisher. Accelerator and brake pedals, steering wheel, of course, but not clutch or gear lever? Nope, Sega have introduced a Ferrari-like semi-automatic gear change controlled by a yellow butterfly lever positioned just behind the steering wheel, operated by the fingertips as you career around the course.

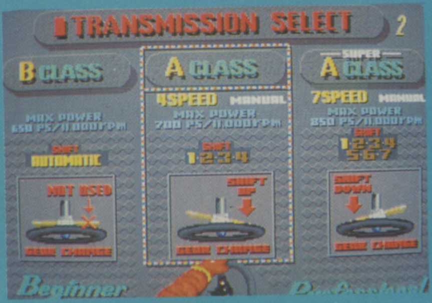
Press the left side, change down – right side, change up. An indication of when to do this is given by one of the head-up displays, a rev counter, placed on the left-hand side of the screen display. In actual fact, it's very unlikely that you'll ever pay any attention to this. A very realistic engine sound is fed into – it seems almost hard-wired – the middle of your brain, and its rising or falling note is exactly synchronised with the revs. But we are jumping ahead of ourselves.

Seated in the cockpit with the unit still in demo mode, not the HUGE SCREEN! It's one of those new 26" screens, combined with a magnifier. As Tom hanks would say: Big. Inserting coins (a frighteningly large sum, but this is state-of-the-art, boys) and you are given the choice of one of three driving configurations. Automatic gearbox – low-power engine, four-speed box – medium power engine, seven speed box – big wobbly engine.

The choice affects your chances in the main race, depending how good you are at the start. Start with Auto while you are learning the track – move up to four, then seven speed, to give yourself a higher performance, but fiddlier control. It's a neat way of giving the machine a long-lasting appeal for the hardened gamesplayer.

Off you start then – firstly a practice lap over the short circuit to qualify for the main race and gain a place on the grid. easy? Do the Japanese eat sushi, John?

The good news is that the practice is easier than the main race. Don't expect to qualify first go, however. Your initial reaction is likely to be one of total disbelief as a sprite-based screen moves with more colours, smoother and faster than you could ever believe. And all the while your visual cortex is getting scrambled, your auditory grey matter is being gently sautéed in a nice white wine sauce, somewhere over the Med.



Options screen – from beginner to pro.

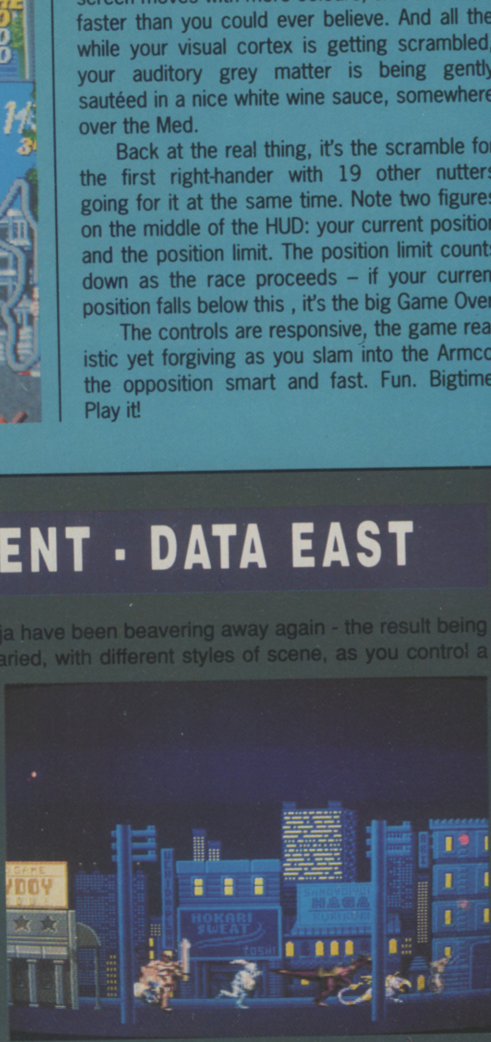
Back at the real thing, it's the scramble for the first right-hander with 19 other nutters going for it at the same time. Note two figures on the middle of the HUD: your current position and the position limit. The position limit counts down as the race proceeds – if your current position falls below this , it's the big Game Over.

The controls are responsive, the game realistic yet forgiving as you slam into the Armco, the opposition smart and fast. Fun. Bigtime. Play it!

SECRET AGENT · DATA EAST

The boys that brought you Dragon Ninja have been beavering away again - the result being Secret Agent. Gameplay looks very varied, with different styles of scene, as you control a James Bond style character with the mission to rescue the President and First Lady from kidnappers. Or - as an exercise in damage limitation - there is always the option of assassinating Dan Quayle......more on that next month.

Until then, how about a look at the winning screen from Golden Axe? You have to run out of the arcade as the machine blows up and the sprites start chasing you for real! You saw it here first, folks.



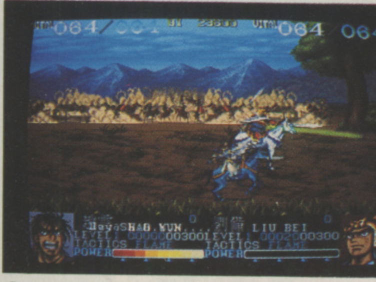
EXTENDED PLAY

ACE gossip from the coin-op closet...

DYNAMITE DUKE

More shooty, shooty games - with one taking the Dead Angle idea of representing you on screen as an outline figure rather than the Op Wolf 'anything that comes through hits you' theme.

More gameplay than Operation Thunderbolt less action than Mechanised Attack, it's easy to get into and gives you the usual ego boost as you blow the opposition away with effortless ease. Have a go - and then write a thesis about why you liked it afterwards.......



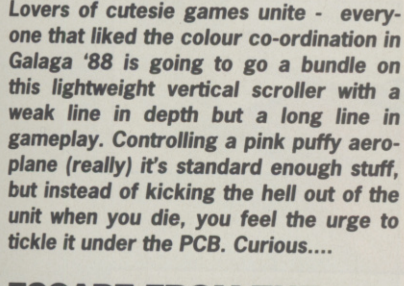
Capcom's Dynasty Wars, reported on last month, and now almost ready for release.

ALPHA PLUS

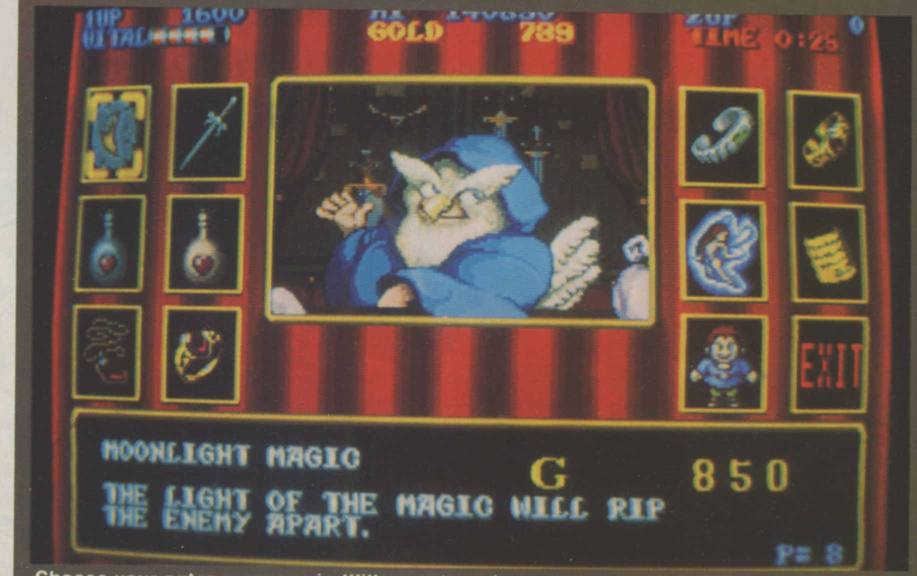
Lovers of cutesie games unite - everyone that liked the colour co-ordination in Galaga '88 is going to go a bundle on this lightweight vertical scroller with a weak line in depth but a long line in gameplay. Controlling a pink puffy aeroplane (really) it's standard enough stuff, but instead of kicking the hell out of the unit when you die, you feel the urge to tickle it under the PCB. Curious....

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

As yet unreleased in Europe, good things are filtering through already about this one from Atari Games. Supposedly taking the piss out of the Buck Rodgers/Flash Gordon type of character (a bit like APB - highly underrated - did with the police force) it should be hitting us within a month or so. You'll know about it around 5 microseconds after we do....and several months before every other games mag......



Secret Agent – see box opposite



MOONLIGHT MAGIC G 850

THE LIGHT OF THE MAGIC WILL RIP THE ENEMY APART.

Choose your extra weapons in *Willow* – at a price.

WILLOW

Willow – a movie that was more a marketing phenomenon than a cinematic experience. the book, the home computer game (courtesy Mindscape), the bendy toys, the paper doilies and now, from Capcom, the coin-op The good news is that the coin-op is probably the best of the lot.

Taking the story of the Hobbit-like character Willow, you have to go on the quest to find the Saint-Child (Mavis Something-or-other), who – so it is prophesied – will be the downfall of evil nasty Witch Queen. Not so much Lord of the Rings, more Keeper of the Pampers..

So much for the story background – it looks like Capcom have, again, used their new board and produced a game background of many colours, scrolling effortlessly via hardware routines and really nicely drawn sprites, stylistically halfway between the 2000AD style of Forgotten Worlds and the cutesieness of Legend of Tonma.

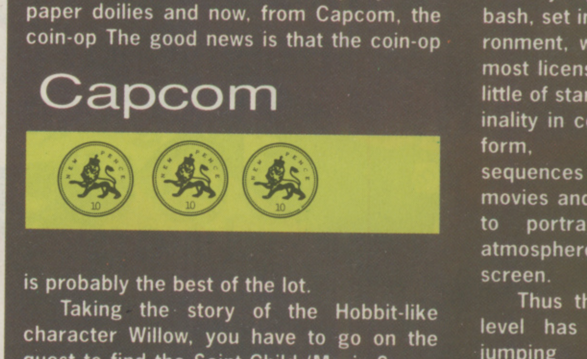
Capcom

As you might expect, it's a half and half, jumpy, jumpy/combat bash, set in a fantasy environment, with – as with most licensing deals – little of startling originality in content or form, taking sequences for the movies and trying to portray the atmosphere onscreen.

Thus the first level has Willow jumping and slashing around (right to left), to meet a giant fire-breathing animal in the final screen and freeing a warrior, who you control in the second scene.

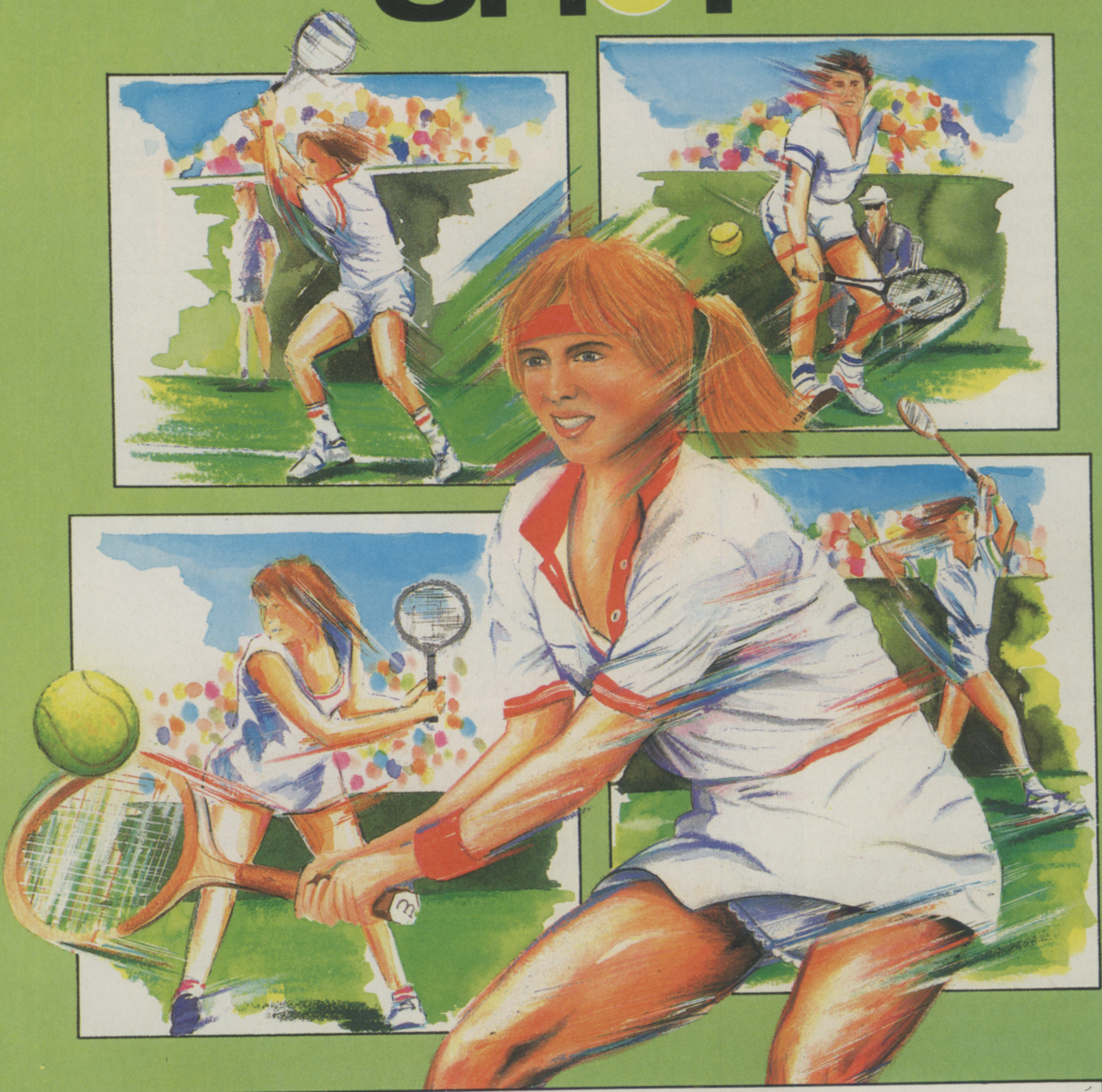
Here you chop your way out of a tavern to try and survive a high-speed cart chase with assorted baddies hot on your heels. And so it goes on.

Varied gameplay, with a strategic element of collecting coins when an enemy is killed to exchange at certain points for extra weapons/protection, Willow is a beautifully implemented tie-in coin-up. Chances are you'll find it worth a few goes, but whether it hooks you or not will almost certainly depend on your liking for those who are short of stature and blessed with hairy feet.

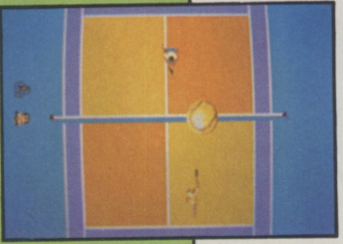


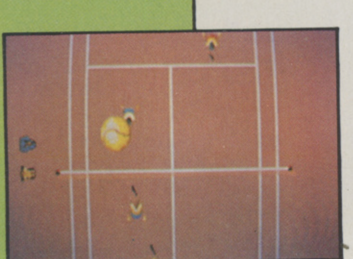
Look out! There's a purple boar about!

PASSING SHOT™



Anyone for tennis?





Not 'alf! Image Works serves up another ace with this conversion of the Sega® coin-op smash.

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"I can't fault it!"
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Amstrad CPC (disc)
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Screenshots from Atari ST version

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Tel: 01-928 1454.

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iMAGE works

ACE AND ACCOLADE GIVE YOU AND A FRIEND A THREE-DAY, HIGH-SPEED, THRILL AS YOU EXPERIENCE THE THRILLS OF THE SPANISH GRAND PRIX FROM YOUR GRANDSTAND SEAT IN JEREZ...

COMPETITION

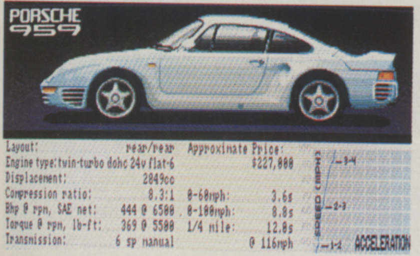
SPANISH FLY!

Ahhh...the roar of heavy metal, screaming down the tarmac at 200mph, under a burning sun in far off Spain. This dream could be yours, amigo...so if you fancy flying off to the sun, get your entry in now!

Accolade have recently joined the ranks of Activision and Electronic Arts by setting up their own British operation – and that means we'll be seeing and hearing a lot more of them in future. Which is just as well, since this US company have already produced some very smooth software – and are now coming out with what must be one of the most varied catalogues around.

You can find out more about Accolade on this month's news pages. Meanwhile, with software like this to drool over, who needs the real thing?

DRIVE THIS



```
Layout:                      rear/rear  Approximate Price:
Engine type:twin-turbo dohc 24v flat-6            $227,000
Displacement:                   2849cc
Compression ratio:               8.3:1  0-60mph:      3.6s
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net:         444 @ 6500  0-100mph:     8.8s
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft:        369 @ 5500  1/4 mile:    12.8s
Transmission:             6 sp manual            @ 116mph
```

...In *Test Drive II*, a scorching PC/Amiga tarmac burner, reviewed in ACE issue 22 and pulling smoothly through the gears to a rating of 885.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

Oh boy, this is REALLY difficult. You've got to write your name and address on a postcard. Make sure your write legibly.

Use your skill, knowledge, and powers of concentration to the full as you check out the pages of this month's ACE and discover the names of FIVE GAMES produced by Accolade.

Drawing upon your faultless primary school education, inscribe the names of these five games upon the postcard. You may use either italic or roman script. You may write in capitals if you wish.

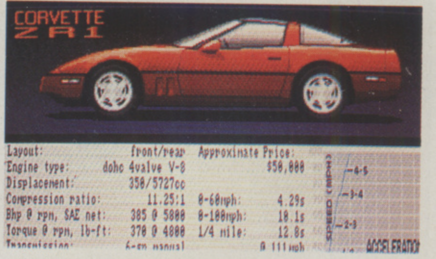
Pop the postcard in the post to **ACE SPAIN, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.**

The closing date for entries is 7th September 1989.

THE PRIZE

The prize will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn at random from those received prior to the closing date. The winner will receive air tickets for two persons, hotel accomodation (bed and breakfast basis), transport to and from the hotel to the airport and the Grand Prix, two grand stand seats, and £100 spending money. At least one of those travelling must be aged over 18.

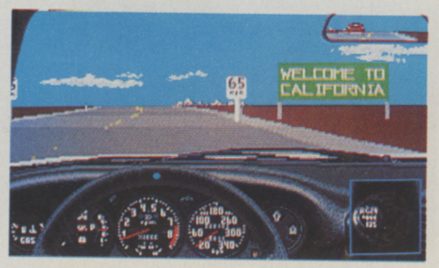
CHOOSE THIS



```
Layout:                front/rear  Approximate Price:
Engine type:       dohc 4valve V-8             $50,000
Displacement:          350/5727cc
Compression ratio:        11.25:1  0-60mph:      4.29s
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net:   385 @ 5800   0-100mph:     10.1s
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft:  370 @ 4800   1/4 mile:     12.8s
Transmission:        6-sp manual              @ 111mph
```

...in The Supercars, an add-on module for Test Drive II owners who want to put a few more tigers on the track.

EXPERIENCE THIS



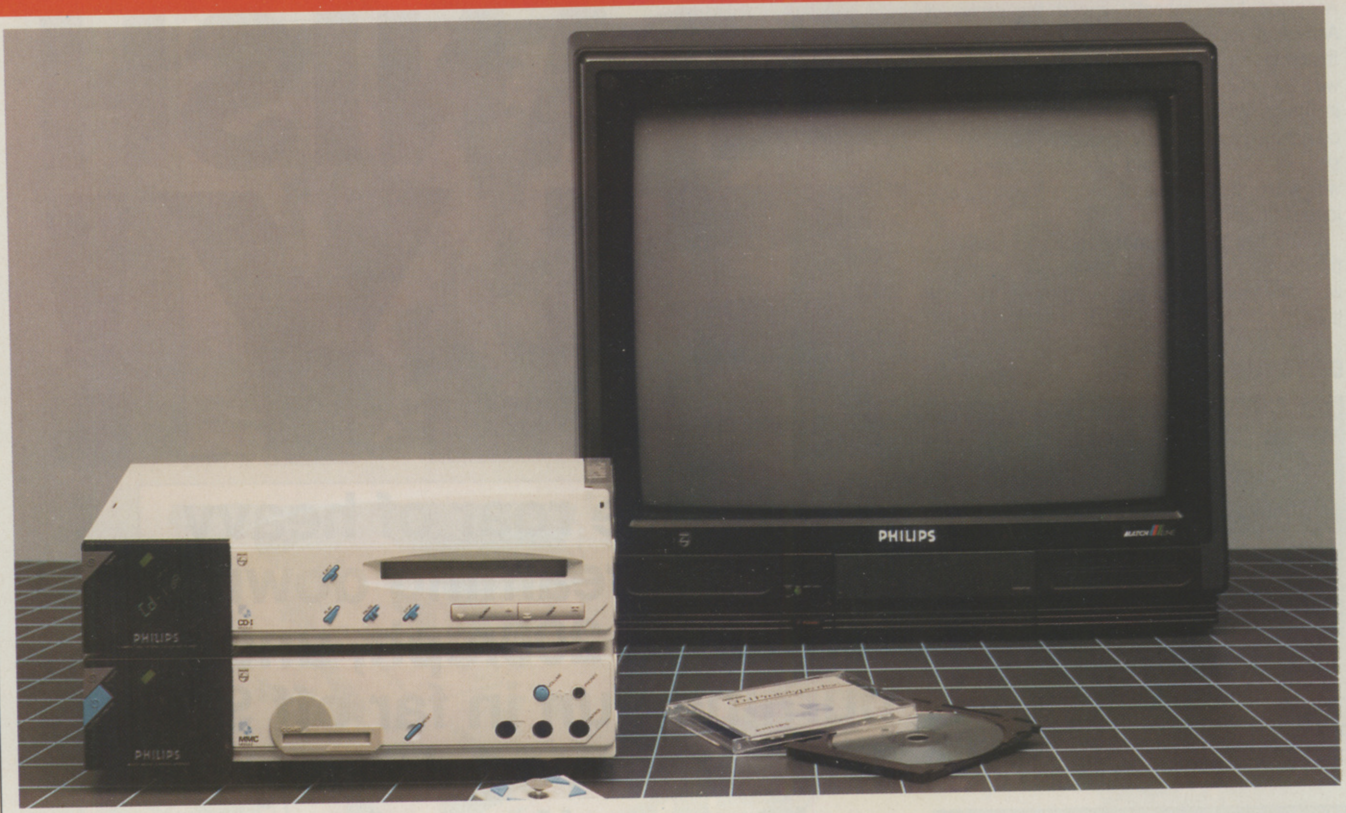
...in California Challenge, another bolt-on for Test Drive II, which puts a whole new world of racing thrills at your fingertips

and WATCH THIS!

At Jerez in sunny Spain on the 1st October 1989. Accolade are giving free air tickets for the winner plus one companion (one of you must be over 18), a free hotel room with twin beds and breakfast included, free transport to the track for practice sessions and the Grand Prix itself, AND £100 spending money...

PLAY THE FILM!

THE NEW CD-I STANDARD OFFERS POWER PLAYING FOR THE 1990'S.



After months of speculation and rumour ACE can now reveal the facts about the world's first Compact Disk-Interactive entertainment system. This, we reckon, is going to be the big one...

The machine has been developed by Sony and Philips jointly and has already been shipped to software developers around the world - many of whom are now working on titles for launch in 1990 and 1991. For those of you who missed the last few issues of ACE, CD-I is a system that will allow the simultaneous use of CD quality audio, still image and motion video, computer graphics,animation and text simultaneosuly and interactively.

Software is stored on a five inch optical disk - the same size as a normal compact disk. The power of the CD-I medium has caused a stampede of software developers to commence development work on CD-I titles. Significantly it is not just entertainment companies who are showing interest - educational publishers and professional training organisations are also showing a keen interest. Philips are laying particular stress on the educational value of their system. A spokesperson enthuses 'Think of owning an encyclopaedia which presents chosen topics in several different ways. Watching a short audio/visual sequence to gain a general background to the topic. Then choosing a word or subject for more in-depth study. Jumping to another topic without losing your place - and returning again after studying the related topic to proceed further. Or watching a cartoon film, play, concert or opera with the interactive capabilities of CD-I added. Calling up information on the actors or singer at will. Displaying the score, libretto or text on screen in a choice of languages. Or removing one singer or instrument to be able to sing or play along with the music"

Right at the beginning of CD-I development Sony/Philips/Panasonic and the other powerful

WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW MUCH?

Because the manufacturers believe strongly in the commercial and professional potential of the CD-I hardware the business version will be launched first - this Winter in America.

Philips/Sony foresee applications in all fields of training and as a sales aid in, for example, a travel agents, enabling the brochure browser to take an interactive video trip to a chosen destination.

The basic unit will come with a monitor and a user interface resembling a mouse. A joystick control pad is also being developed with several buttons for more advanced interaction. The software will be totally mouse driven - although the manufacturers are not writing off the availability of a keyboard at some stage.

The business version will be available in the US this winter at around the $2,000 mark - about £1,500 at current rates. The consumer version is described by Philips as "a sub $1,000 product" and will be launched late next year or early 1991. At around the £750 mark a CD-I system will cost about the same as an Amiga once you have added a decent monitor and a printer - but offering infinitely more power. But with encyclopaedia, dictionaries, and atlases already under development for CD-I the system may be able to provide that which the computer has never really delivered on - genuine home study facilities. This overall appeal of CD-I has the potential to make it the entertainment /education centre of the home in the early to mid 1990's. This means one of two things: either the home computer is going to have a tough battle on its hands, or else – more likely, we suspect – the likes of Amiga and Atari will start including CD-I circuitry and interfaces in their machines.

And that's only the beginning. Once companies like Amstrad climb on the bandwagon, we can expect systems at much lower prices. This effectively means that, independently of any advances in computer technology, the next three years could give us enormous entertainment potential for less than we would currently spend on a decent 16-bit micro.

electronics giants in the cartel look as if they have overcome the main problem that has thwarted the growth of the computer industry - a lack of standards in hardware and software.The group have published the 'Green Book' - laying down the rules for developing hardware and software for CD-I. The book device was used successfully for the promotion of the world standard in CD Audio through the 'Red Book' and most recently through a 'Yellow Book' for the standard in CD-Rom storage devices for computers. The world wide acceptance of these publishing standards has given a great boost to CD Audio and latterly to CD Rom and will be a major factor in CD-I's likely success.

The CD-I hardware unit is really two CD players in one. The first handles the audio - and will play conventional CD's. The second goes an important stage further - handling the Multi Media Controller - containing the video and text decoder circuits and memories needed to play CD-I disks, and the powerful M6870 microprocessor - which is the 'brain' that controls the play and runs the interactive software.

The technology that makes CD-I a reality has as much to do with software as it does hardware. On a conventional CD disk all of the space on the disk is used to store the audio information - with perhaps a tiny amount of information - a graphic or the words to a song being added as a 'sub-code' track. By using new digital encoding techniques the space requirement for sound is reduced to make room for other information. This technique is called Adaptive Delta Pulse Code Modulation (ADPCM). What this means is that next to CD three levels of ADPCM sound are foreseen. The highest level A is equal to high quality stereo sound and occupies only 50% of the disc, the lowest level (or C level) only 6% in speech mode. Video program material, as well as text, data and control program code can then be stored on the remainder of the disc. Compression techniques have also cut the storage space needed for the video images and user manipulated graphics - enabling one disc to store all of the information for 1 hour's continuous full screen, full motion animation program material, with a digital quality sound track.

These different types of media - sound , picture and text, can be interleaved. To produce the images and sounds the data is separated into various decoding paths in a continuous realtime process. The 68,000 series microprocessor at the heart of the CD-I player then assembles and synchronises the various information types to present the program on screen and through the stereo loudspeakers. The CD-I Real-Time-Operating-System (CD-RTOS) and the application program stored on the CD-I disc make sure this all happens smoothly.

HERE'S THE SPEC

PHYSICAL FORMAT:

Total data capacity: a staggering 650 Megabytes per disk.
Read speed: 75 sectors/second (approx 170K/sec)

AUDIO

	Stereo/mono	Channels
CD digital audio	Stereo	1
Hi-fi mode	Stereo	2
	Mono	4
Mid-hif-fi mode	Stereo	4
	Mono	8
Speech	Stereo	8
	Mono	16

70 minutes playing time per channel

VIDEO

Maximum no of channels 32
One common format for both NTSC and PAL.
Resolution:

	NTSC	PAL
Normal	360*240	384*280
Double	720*240	768*280
High	720*480	768*560

PIXEL CODING

Picture type:

Natural	Delta YUV ($:2:2) 4 bit quantisation
RGB	15 bits/pixel
Color look up table	Up to 256 colours on-screen
Run-length animation	Up to 128 colours on screen

Plus hardware video effects including wipes, dissolves, overlays, scrolling, partial updating, etc.

CD-RTOS

(CD real time operating system)
System software for handling interleaved real-time audio, video, and data files. Uses 68000 code on disk, combined with fiole protection, hierarchical file structure, standard graphics functions, and system extensions. The user interface is a cursor driven by a pointing device such as a mouse, joystick, or trackball.

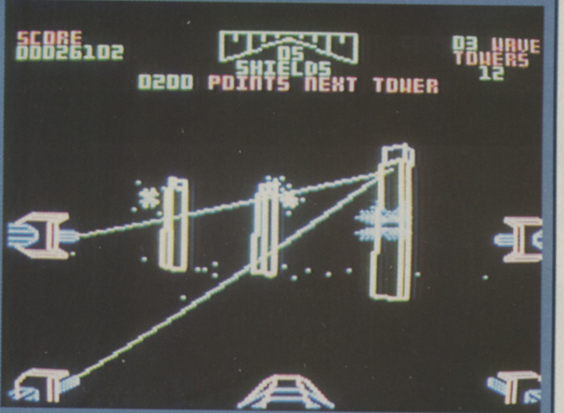
CDI - THE SOFT SIDE

Several hundred CD-I prototypes have been shipped to software developers all over the world. Development systems and 'authoring tools' are in the hands of the designers now - and we will see the first working CD-I titles towards the end of this year in America. Some of the more interesting CD-I programs known to be under development are Classic X Men, produced in collaboration with Marvell comics - described by its authors as the 'first laser comic book', Ultimate Athlete's Golf title is described as a 'golf enthusiasts dream'. The Rand McNally Atlas is a self-directed guided tour of all 50 states of America.

Again emphasising the wider market aimed at by CD-I software developers is Sexual Sphere - described as "a sensitive exploration of human sexuality".

In addition to the titles described above are projects from Parker Brothers (one of the largest toy manufacturers in the world and the holders of several Star Wars licences), Polygram - the music publisher, and many games companies. Activision, Cinemaware, Electronic Arts, Mirrorsoft, and Infogrames are all known to be working on CD-I projects.

There's a problem, however, and that's the money needed to generate a CD-I product. Film quality animation requires enormous graphics resources and although specialised hardware exists to speed up the process by which screens are drawn, 'in-betweened', and finished, it is way beyond the budgets of all but the most wealthy companies. However, computer game companies, although less cash-endowed than their film industry counterparts, do have one big advantage – they are way ahead in terms of their knowledge and experience of developing interactive electronic entertainment. One strong possibility could be joint-venture releases between computer game companies and film companies, with each offering their own skills and assets. One thing's for sure, with a system and a standard to follow, there's going to be no shortage of titles. Many of these could be hypertext-inspired systems – see the Hypergames feature in this issue for more details.



Look at this, imagine the film, and check your bank balance – soon you'll be playing the movie.

SQUEEZ NG OVER A DOZEN

Special Action
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Special Action
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BLOOD
VINDICATOR!
DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE
SDI
NOW THE ODDS ARE EVEN
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RAINBOW WARRIOR

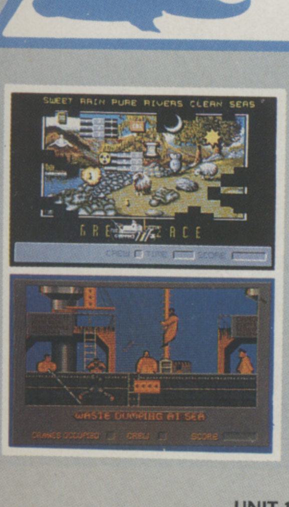
RAINBOW WARRIORS

The worlds first environment friendly software!

At last, an all action game that presents a solution to the environmental dilemma faced by the entire human race. Rainbow Warriors is an action game with real depth and meaning. It simulates seven campaigns of Greenpeace members over the last few years.

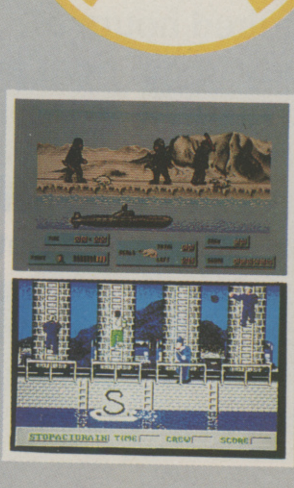
RAINBOW WARRIORS

GREENPEACE


SWEET RAIN PURE RIVERS CLEAN SEAS
GREENPEACE
CREW TIME SCORE
WASTE DUMPING AT SEA
CHANGES OCCURRED CREW SCORE

MicroStyle

GAMES FOR ADULTS


S
STOP ACID RAIN! TIME: CREW: SCORE:

UNIT 1, HAMPTON ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, TETBURY, GLOS. TEL: 0666 504326/504412.

PIXELLATIONS

GRAPHIC IDEAS CAN GIVE BIRTH TO NEW GAMES

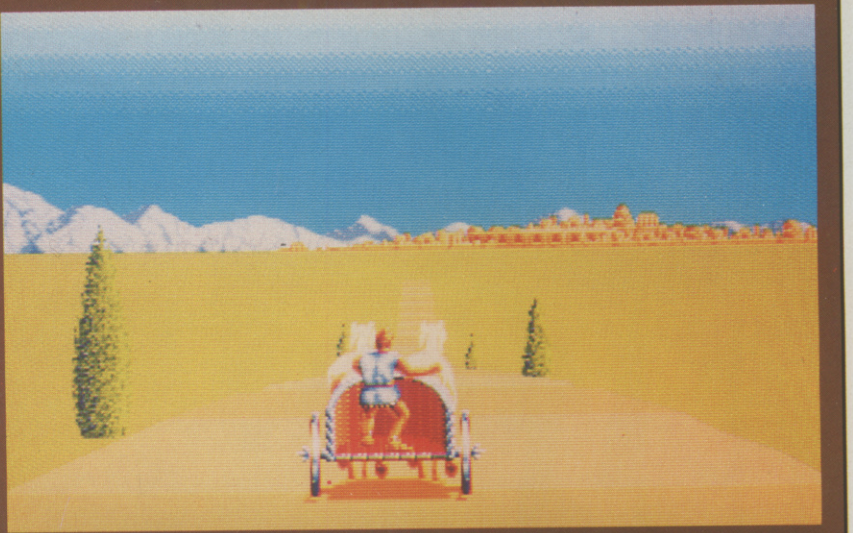
When we visited Psygnosis, we never expected all this! The company gave us a grand tour of all the titles they had under development and showed us how each one was put together. You can see the screens for yourself.

Every one of these programs started life as a programming challenge, and you get some idea of the challenges involved in each program by seeing how the pictures were built up. Often, it was the successful completion of a tricky animation routine that allowed the company to move ahead and develop a full-scale game.

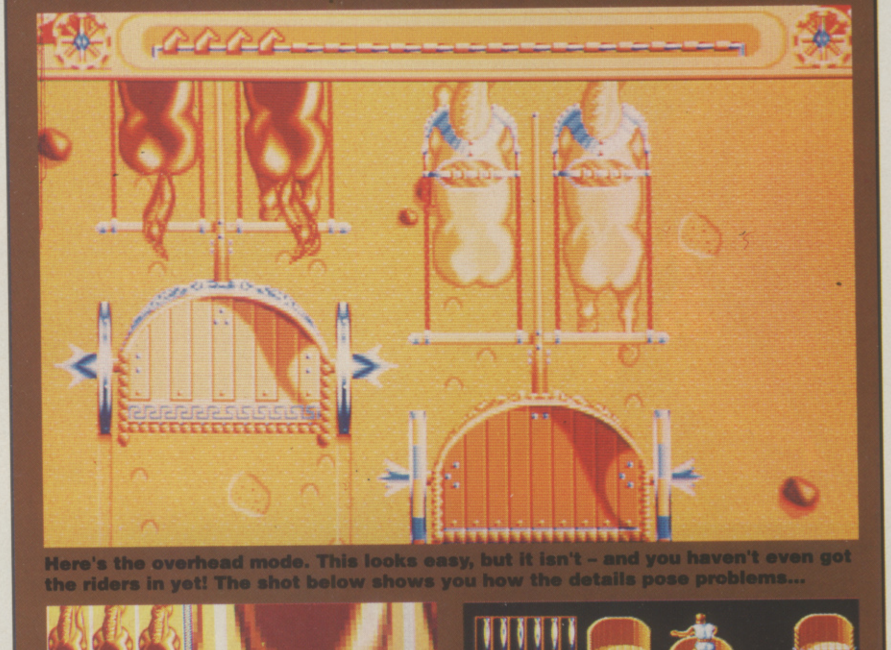
Take the shark, for example. This required hours of study to get right and the result is extraordinarily effective. It could well form part of a sequence in a new game.. in fact...well...there are still some secrets up there in Liverpool!

BOADICEA!

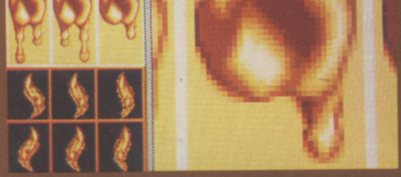
Developing their chariot game involved hours of effort and some of the most difficult graphics challenges the company had faced in animation terms. The problem was not only the complexity of the horse's anatomy but also the fact that the gameplay demanded both side-on and overhead viewpoints.



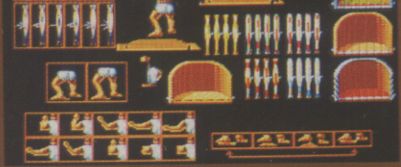
Looks OK from behind, but even here the animation task is far from simple. Every element of the chariot has to be individually defined.



Here's the overhead mode. This looks easy, but it isn't – and you haven't even got the riders in yet! The shot below shows you how the details pose problems...



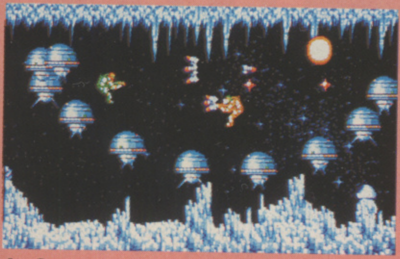
Aargh! It took ages to get this shading right, but the effort was worth it – you can actually watch the muscles ripple.



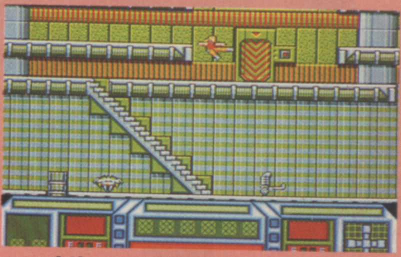
Phew! It's up to the coder now. He gets this screen as picture file and can grab the bits when he needs them.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

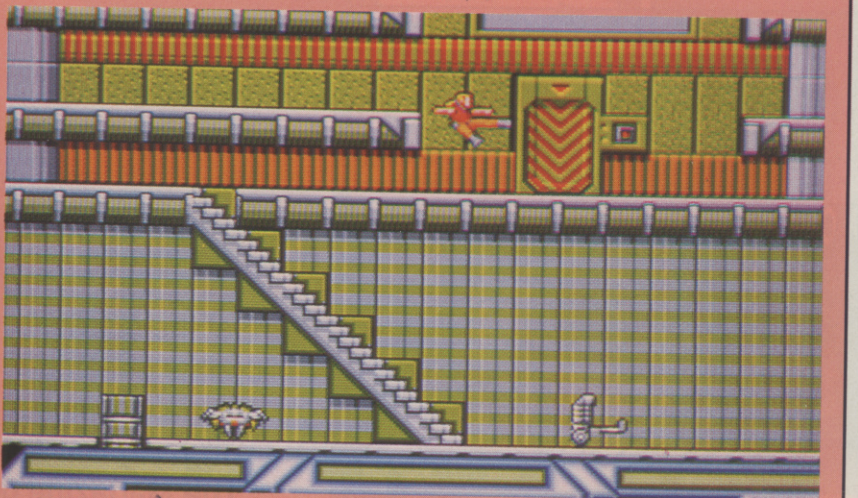
One area that Psygnosis have been experimenting with recently is the size of animated images on-screen. 'We felt,' said Ian Hetherington, 'that there was probably an optimum size for the screen figure and we wanted to find the smallest size (thus revealing the most background) that was compatible with the optimum animation.'



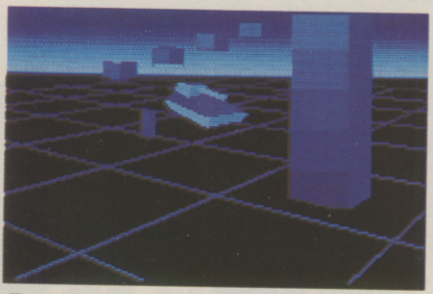
In Game 1, the graphics team experimented with figures of all sizes...



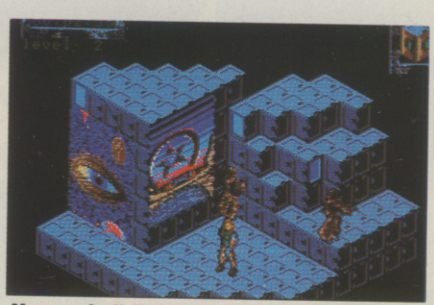
...and the result was a screen display showing the maximum amount of background...



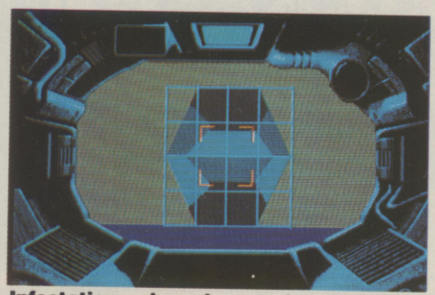
...with the best possible animation. Here you can see the various frames for the central figure, as they would be passed to the programmer for coding in.



Exploring 3D tank animation. The speed and quality of animation has already got the developers excited.

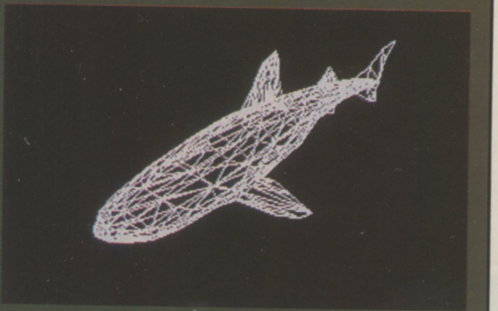


Nevermind! This new title sprung from a scenario where the action constantly flips through 90 degrees.

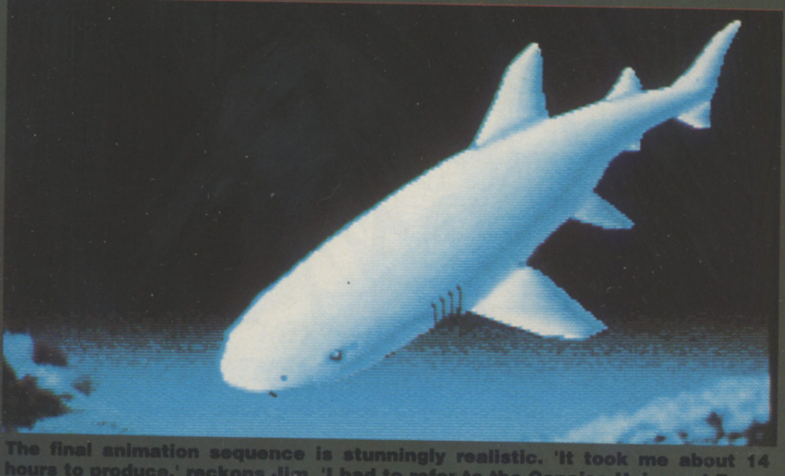


Infestation – based around a 3D world where you can crouch and look at low level – here through a ventilator shaft.

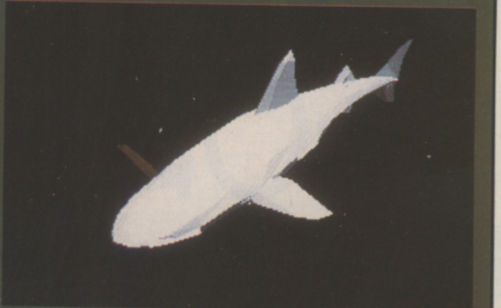
However good a coder you are, smooth animation still relies as much on graphic design as it does on good routines. Here artist Jim Bowers is experimenting with Sculpt 4D and you can see the three stages involved in creating a large-scale screen animation for possible use in a forthcoming title (no names, no packdrill). The first shot shows the shark as a set of polygons, generated in Sculpt. The second and third images were taken after import into Deluxe Paint III for animation.



Sculpt4D enables you to construct objects from a set of polygons - there are over 200 in this image.



The final animation sequence is stunningly realistic. 'It took me about 14 hours to produce,' reckons Jim. 'I had to refer to the Concise Universal Encyclopaedia for the anatomic details. Life drawing is an important practise...'



Once the image has been imported into Deluxe Paint III it can be prepared for animation and quickly edited.

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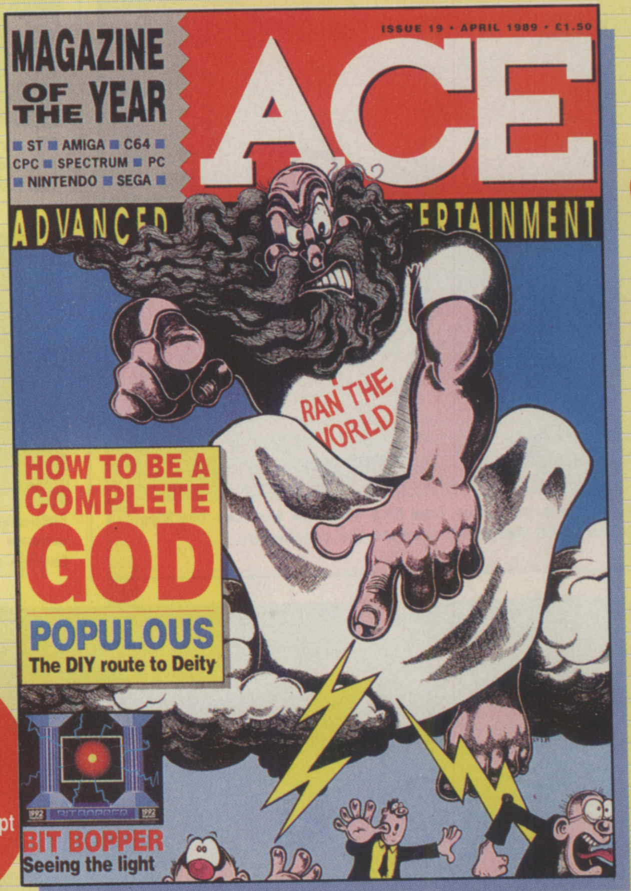
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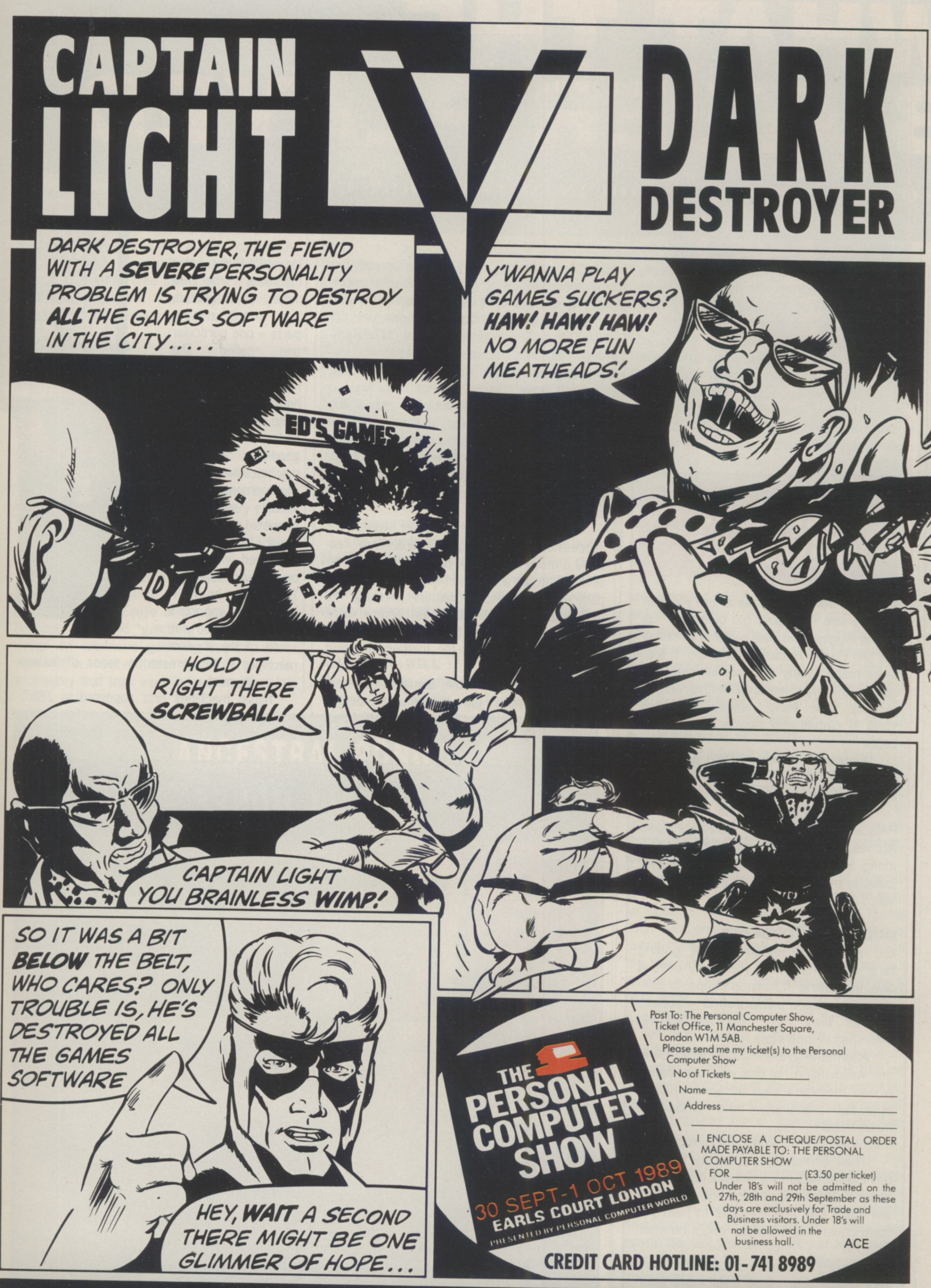
CAPTAIN LIGHT
V
DARK DESTROYER
DARK DESTROYER, THE FIEND WITH A SEVERE PERSONALITY PROBLEM IS TRYING TO DESTROY ALL THE GAMES SOFTWARE IN THE CITY.....
ED'S GAMES
Y'WANNA PLAY GAMES SUCKERS? HAW! HAW! HAW! NO MORE FUN MEATHEADS!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE SCREWBALL!
CAPTAIN LIGHT YOU BRAINLESS WIMP!
SO IT WAS A BIT BELOW THE BELT, WHO CARES? ONLY TROUBLE IS, HE'S DESTROYED ALL THE GAMES SOFTWARE
HEY, WAIT A SECOND THERE MIGHT BE ONE GLIMMER OF HOPE...
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ACE

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SWITCHED ON FOR LEISURE

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Organisers: Montbuild Ltd., 11 Manchester Square, London W1M 5AB.

WHAT THE BUTLER PLAYED

WHO PUT THE FIRST COIN INTO THE FIRST COIN-OP?

TWO
Lovely
Ladies
TWO
EXOTIC
DANCES
10p

The history of the coin-op goes back nearly 2000 years, when an inventor called Heron produced a machine which sprinkled holy water when a five drachma coin was inserted into its slot. Punters queued up round the block, but there was no hi-score facility, no power-ups, and the sound was poor. Everyone sat back and waited for another twenty centuries.

The Industrial Revolution in the 18th century saw the invention of vending machines, automatic scales and music machines. These were great for spending money but didn't exactly get the adrenalin flowing (unless you were emptying the cash box). Arcade freaks had to wait another couple of hundred years or so until the late 19th century when automated ENTERTAINMENT machines became widespread.

The earliest machines were very simple. Strength testers were amongst the first to appear, and invited customers to assault the machine either by kicking, punching or gripping, and their performance was registered by a meter. This was rather like some of the modern coin-ops, though nowadays the motivation for kicking and punching tends to be slightly different.

The early machines, however, were very successful – and straightforward. They featured a meter and a kick/punch/grip area. The all-metal construction sometimes resulted in particularly aggressive punters breaking fingers and toes. Later machines became more sophisticated, with the torsos of muscle men proffering arms to test the mettles of young Edwardian bloods.

Also popular were the animated coin-ops. The first sort simply gave the viewer the delight of watching such things as a train of elephants spinning around a model landscape – very boring stuff really. Later machines became more sophisticated, with more moving parts – one particular one called The Seance features a neat little haunted house scene complete with moving furniture and appearing ghoulies. These machines were really developments of the earlier peep-show, puppet show, and magic lantern ideas, combined with a few cogs and springs. They did, however, have one important point in common with some of the modern machines – they created a sense of fantasy and excitement.

Music machines first appeared in 1887, and were soon combined with animation to produce dancing bears, singing golliwogs and

SEEING IS BELIEVING

There are very few places where you can actually see AND play old coin-ops - by far the biggest and best place in Britain is the Old Penny Palace in Brighton. It features many, many old mechanical coin-ops of the type featured in this article, ranging from early mutoscopes from 1895 to pinball and picture shows from 1955.

Punters play with real old pennies - it's 60p for 12 coins and £1.00 for 24 - and it's all highly enjoyable.

If you're interested, the Old Penny Palace can be found on the Kings Road Arches under the promenade by heading along the beach from the Palace Pier towards the West Pier - it's well worth a visit.

COLLECTING COIN-OPS

Old mechanical machines are getting rarer and rarer, but if you fancy owning one, try looking in Antique shops, or asking the more established arcades whether they have any unused old machines in their store rooms.

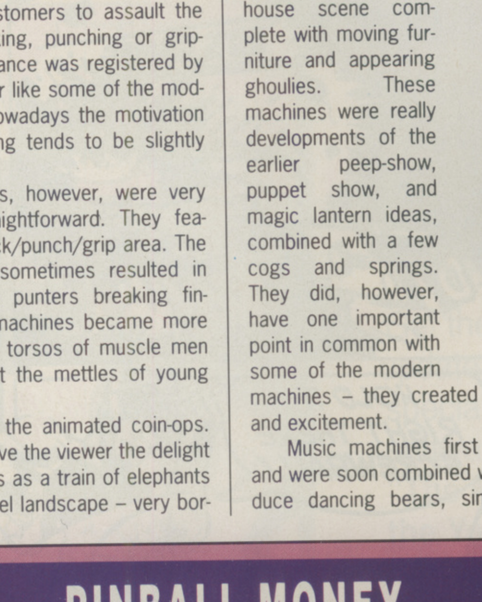
Alternatively, there's the Pinball Owners Association, a brilliant organisation whose members own all sorts of coin-operated machinery from pinball to mechanical machines, video games and juke boxes.

Their bi-monthly periodical, the Pinball Player, has many articles covering all aspects of coin-op equipment, and there are small ads and contacts to help you track down machines you might be interested in.

A yearly membership to the POA is a very reasonable _8.50 - for more information write to PINBALL OWNERS ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 2, HASLEMERE, SURREY, GU27 2EQ.

PINBALL MONEY

The most famous of all arcade games is the pinball machine, which has its roots firmly entrenched in bagatelle, an old game which started to become popular during the earlier part of the 1800s. Early machines were pure bagatelle, with players launching the ball onto the field, attempting to rack up as high a score as possible.



Check out that state-of-the-art hi-score table.

But this type of game was incredibly popular, and during the early thirties production increased massively. In 1931 the Ballyhoo (launched by Bally - who also invented Space Invaders, but sadly closed down only last year), and in 1932 the Baffle Ball (Gottlieb, a name still synonymous with pinball today) were both manufactured in large numbers, and ensured the pinball boom.

Machines continued to appear in that format with little improvement, apart from electrical scoring, until after the war, when a little device known as the flipper was added - and that's when the amusement machine went from boom to phenomenon.

even teddy bear bands. All a far cry from the thundering stereo of 720°. This sort of machine was, however, very popular, and newer versions are still being produced and can be found in arcades up and down the country. Our particular favourite is the dancing bear situated along Brighton front – stuff in a ten pence and be treated to a hilarious display...

A progression of the animated music coin-ops were the laughing machines – stuff your dosh in the slot and be treated to several minutes of horrendously raucous laughter from a jolly sailor, policeman... etc. A rarer machine is the crying baby, on display in the Old Penny Arcade in Brighton (see panel), which features a tired-looking father attempting to rock his screaming baby to sleep – it's a hoot!

EARNING A FORTUNE

Fortune tellers were also amongst the earliest coin-ops. These useless articles simply dispensed a card upon which was written such earth-shattering predictions as, 'You will meet a tall, dark stranger' or 'You will regret putting 1d in a funny little slot'.

It says something about the human race (we're not sure what) that the machine was very popular and featured in the arcades right up until the mid seventies. Marketing had something to do with it – later machines looked more complicated than their antiquated predecessors and featured such delights as, 'Have your mind read by the magic of television' (chortle), or the 'Green mystery ray tells your fortune'. Some really made a bid for stardom with animated characters, such as Gyspy Rose, but all basically offered the same services.

Almost in the same genre are the 'love machines' - shove in your penny and one of a list of 'love criteria' (romantic, caring, jealous) is lit by a bulb. Random stuff, really - but nevertheless a winning formula that can still be found in the arcades today.

The Green Ray, for greenhorns.

PAY UP, PAY UP, AND PLAY THE GAME

The infamous fruit machine first made an appearance just after the turn of the century in 1905 – and never looked back. Oddly enough, the three-reeled format changed little until the microchip revolution in the late seventies, when fruit machines really came of age. Mind you, even today, some new fruit machines are modelled on early classics, and have a very similar look and feel to their ancestors! We'll be looking at the development of the fruit machine next month. It's a terrifying story!

Skill machines such as bagatelle or 'Penny Falls' with prizes caused quite a stir when they first appeared, because of the fine distinction between "skill" and "gambling". Operators, to dodge an expensive gambling licence, often appeared in court with their machines to prove to the jury that they were indeed machines of skill by being able to win game after game!

The rewards were very limited, often simply the prestige to get to the bottom, or getting your penny back, but nevertheless the machine type was popular, and more modern versions were still being produced during the sixties!

KILL, KILL, KILL

Modern arcade games tend to rely on mass destruction but we shouldn't blame the 20th century entirely, since it's a fad that started some years before. Shooting games were always a very popular amusement – the first one appeared 1887, and used compressed air and real missiles – much to the danger of the surrounding public. In one case, a punter bearing a loaded gun turned to talk to a colleague, the trigger caught in his coat and he shot the girl who was running the stall in the neck. Bobbies were swiftly on the scene, and hauled the poor fellow off to the nick, where he had to explain that it was all a ghastly accident. Fortunately, he wasn't prosecuted.

Machines in which you fired the actual coin, or ball bearings at a target was the next, safer, development, and set a trend that was to remain unchanged until 1896, when a non-projectile machine that used electrical contacts was created.

According to Nic Costa, author of Automatic Pleasures, shooting machines were to have an upsurge of popularity before and during each world war (a 'Smash Hitler' machine produced during WWII featured the fizzog of the evil one himself and invited fun-loving punters to take pot shots at his teeth) and reaching a peak during the Cold War period of the fifties.

Shooting machines weren't the only thing to become popular during the war. Some arcade machines were designed specifically as propaganda tools. One particular ball bearing machine has the player attempting to shoot his ball into 'allied' slots to win a prize – if the ball falls into enemy hands, illuminated with Nazi and Japanese flags, the game is lost.

Sporting themes often cropped up in the arcades, with bar football-type games appearing as the sport became increasingly more popular. In the USA there were mechanical American Football and Baseball games, but due to the fact that the sport was little known over here, very few machines were imported from across the pond.

And that's where we leave off. Next month we'll continue the history of the coin-op by taking you from early electro-mechanical pinball to the first whiffs of Pong...

ANCESTRAL PONG

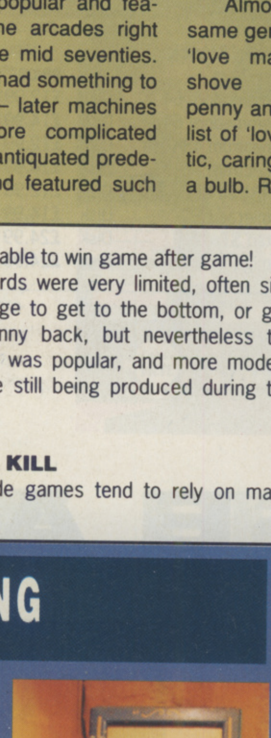
An important date in amusement coin-ops was 1892, when Thomas Edison produced the Kinetoscope, the earliest of the film viewing machines but, strangely, more complex than the machine that would ultimately become its successor. Inside was a long reel of film which was wound by the punter to give a short film - usually of "educational" themes

In 1897, the Mutoscope came onto the market. This was a very simple machine which had a reel of still photographs, which were then rotated swiftly, like you would flick through a book, to give the viewer an impression of movement. The machine was relatively cheap, and mass marketing was assured.

Like the Kinetoscope, these machines initially had educational "films", but manufacturers soon realised that there was far more money to be made with more riske material, and thus "What the Butler Saw" would go down in the annals of history.

Bawdy films and steamy pictures continued to play a part in the amusement business right up to the seventies, with viewing machines becoming "stereographic", full colour and even saucier - especially the German ones.

As you can imagine, the naughtier Mutoscopes ran into opposition - but never on a national scale. It was up to local authorities to deal with errant coin-op vendors how they saw fit. One particular example happened in Scotland, when an arcade owner was asked by the Borough Council to make the titles of his machines less lewd. Naturally, when he placed the new placards exclaiming "Don't Watch This", he found his profits increased!



The Mutoscope

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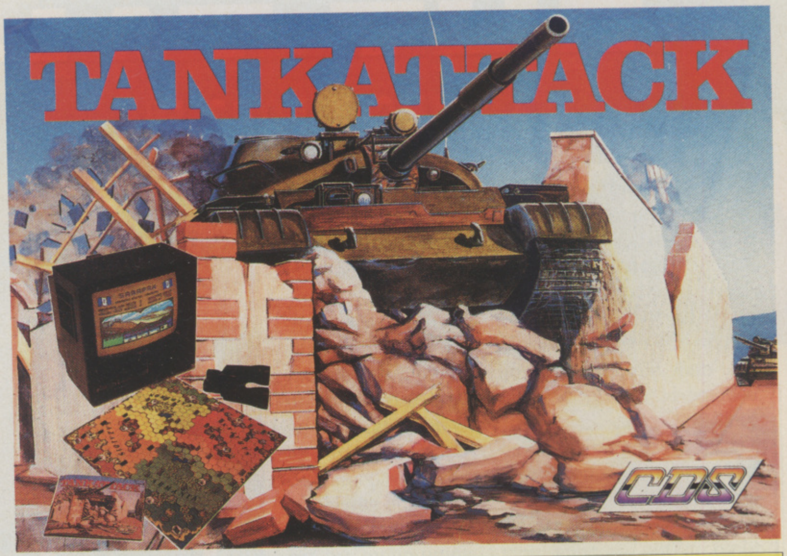

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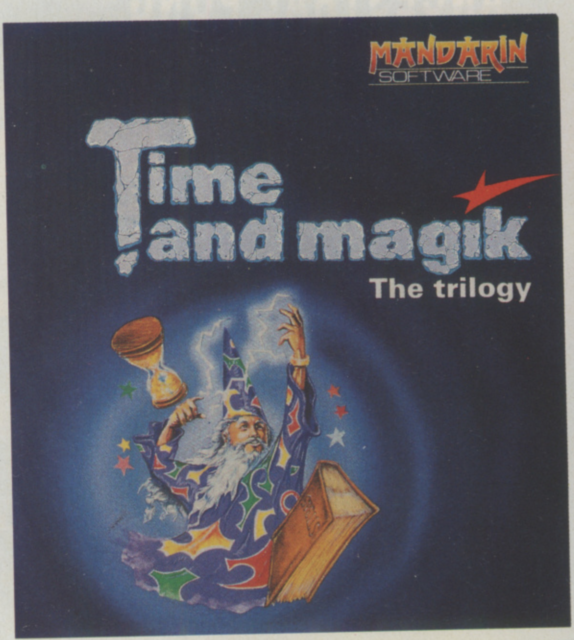

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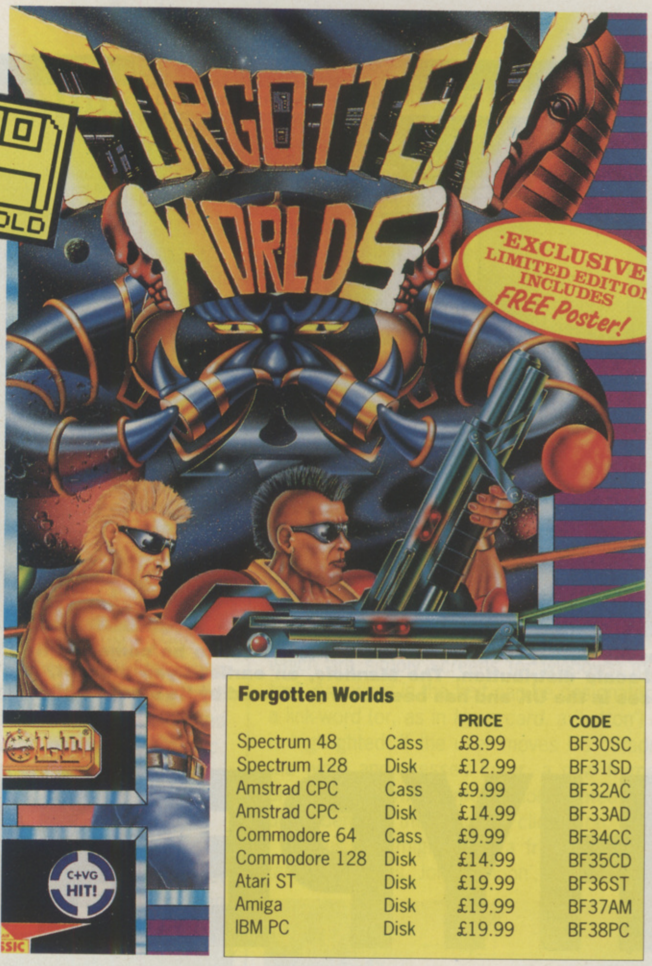
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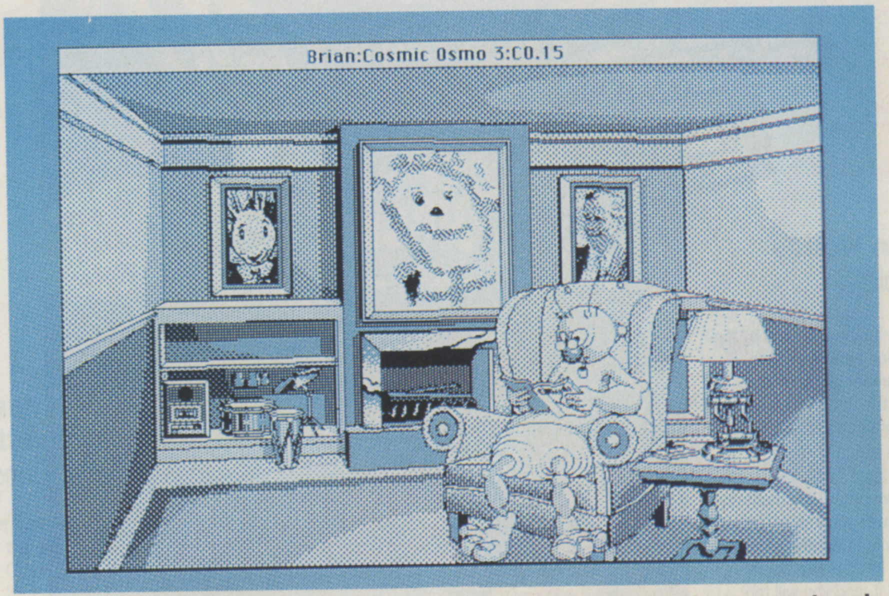


***Cosmic Osmo*, featured in ACE 23, looks set to be come the first hypergame to gain full-scale distribution. *The Manhole*, an earlier Cyan product, has made few appearances in the UK and has been overshadowed by its more ambitious successor.**

HYPERGAMES

It's the sort of thing we've all dreamed of. A new style of game that offers complete satisfaction, long-term interest, intellectual opportunity, and the occasional adrenalin boost. It can be coded by any creative individual without requiring a degree in computing science or a knowledge of 68000 machine code. It lends itself easily to almost any scenario you care to think of. It can be played on consoles as well as computers.

It's called a hypergame, and the first examples are about to hit the shops. Can this possibly be true?

We all know that the game ideas we've grown up with have been more or less forced upon us by the arcade industry. That's not to decry the ideas – many of them are excellent game scenarios that offer excitement and addiction in generous measure. But they all have one thing in common – they have a player objective, whether it be a high score in *Defender* or conquering the final planet in *Blood Money*. The player objective is such a basic element of arcade gaming that we take it for granted. We shouldn't, as you'll see in a moment.

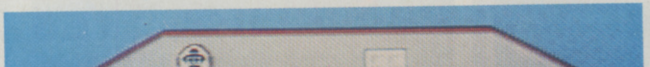
Parallel with the development of the arcade game, we've also seen new game ideas brought in from the role-playing game industry and from the aircraft simulations market. And, of course, board games have provided several enjoyable programs, ranging from *Trivial Pursuit* to *Chessmaster 2000*. But here again, these games all have objectives. Even *Flight Simulator II*, which at first glance might seem to lack objectives, has the obvious challenge of learning to fly your airplane efficiently, though once you've done that there's not much left to do.

Finally, all these games require considerable coding expertise. There are one or two exceptions in the adventure market where programs like *The Quill* and *GAC* have allowed non-programmers to turn out a reasonable product, but these exceptions have rarely, if ever, excited much interest due to their limited, cloned natures. Good games, it seems, are produced by good programmers. This is something else we take for granted – and, again, we shouldn't.

PLAYER FREEDOM

The idea of a game in which you simply have fun in an aimless fashion and which doesn't challenge you in terms of hi-scores, puzzle solutions, or victory over your opponent may sound strange but, if you think about it, that's what a book or film offers you. Narrative entertainment simply requires you to surrender yourself to a flight of fancy and enjoy the process. People enjoy books and films, so surely if we were able to convey this using a computer we could then add in a third element, interactivity, to make things even more interesting.

This was what Robyn Miller, a non-computerate graphic artist in Washington USA, wanted. He'd tried adventure games and enjoyed the narrative elements of games like *Zork* and *Collossal Cave*, but he became frustrated when his innocent exploration was cut short by sudden death or an apparently insoluble puzzle. There was also the annoyance of a textual interface, which is OK for narrative but not much good for animated worlds. Since Robyn wasn't a programmer, it didn't seem as if there was much he could do about things, so he gave up and went back to illustration.



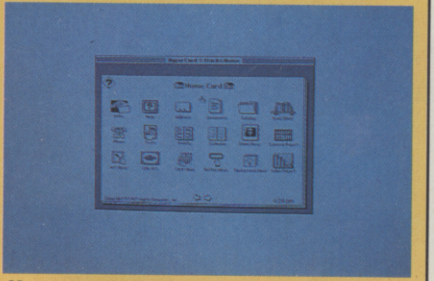
It's perhaps not surprising that Activision were the first company to bring hypergames to the market. They've already shown interest in exploring new game-styles and the best example has to be the quirky *Little Computer People* in which you simply watch the LCP move about the screen, with very little possibility for interaction. The LCP would play records (and you could listen, if you could bear it) tinkle on the piano, feed the dog, and carry out other mundane tasks. You could communicate with him via the typewriter. A game without objectives, certainly, but with only one maion screen the interest level soon palled.

HOW HYPERCARD STACKS UP

Hypercard caused a lot of excitement when it was first released, but it has been slow to find practical application. Games programming could be one of the best uses for it...

The program is built around the concept of 'stacks' – related frames (*cards*) of information stacked together. You can *browse* through cards, which can contain graphics, text, or even associated sound files – everything you need to tell a story or produce an interactive game environment.

You browse through a stack sequentially, or else you can use *buttons*, icons that, when clicked on, call up another related card and open new avenues of exploration. *Hypercard* has its own simple programming language that enables non-programmers to generate their own applications.



***Hypercard's* 'home card' – from here you can explore any stack by clicking on relevant button or icon.**

Some years later, Robyn's brother, Rand Miller, a programmer in New Mexico, discovered the Apple Macintosh and, in particular, a program called *Hypercard. Hypercard* is a simple utility that builds on hypertext concepts (see below) to allow the user to develop a full-scale graphics interface. Rand soon realised that here was a tool that would allow his brother to generate the fully animated, interactive, narrative game he had been dreaming about. They started work on a project called *Manhole* that was finally released in January 1989 by Activision. *Manhole* was the world's first hypergame and its world opened up from the initial screen, a large manhole which, when clicked upon, sprouted a vast beanstalk. *Cosmic Osmo*, featured in the last issue of ACE, was the second.

THE HYPERGAME

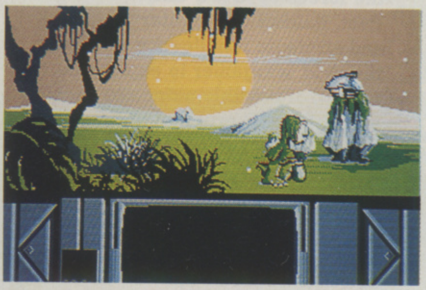
Osmo draws its power from a very simple set of ideas. It presents the user with a full-screen display of your current location and allows you to move a pointer over the image. Clicking on certain 'buttons' (see the *Hypercard* box) causes the program to go into a new display routine... it may be a new location (full screen display) or simply an animated sequence overlaid on the current location – a mouse running out from under the sofa, for example.

In addition to displays, buttons can trigger off sound cues (digitised or otherwise) and could even trigger off whole sub-programs. You could construct an entire hypergame within another hypergame. It is this inter-related structure that gives the programs their power and also their name, since it is derived from the 'hypertext' concept, which was also responsible for the development of *Hypercard.*

HYPERTEXT

Hypertext is a concept normally applied in database technology where a programmer wants to present a large amount of linked information. Information is presented in 'frames', which are simply screens (or windows) full of text. Any word in the text can be designated as a link-word (or, as in *Hypercard*, a 'button') and is highlighted. If the user moves his cursor to the word and presses Enter, a new frame is displayed, showing information related to, or dependent on, the word you clicked on.

Thus you might have a frame which contains the words 'John Lennon', and clicking on these would call up a new frame with a list of his songs, each highlighted together with (also highlighted) the date of composition. Clicking on the various titles might open up new frames, possible containing the musical scores of the pieces concerned, or a digitised recording of them (if you had enough memory), or else you could click on the dates and get a historical chart of the years in question, together with further buttons that would enable you to continue your exploration. Sooner or later, you might well stumble across a frame with the word 'musicians' in it, clicking upon which gets you back to the frame we started with. This time, however, you might click on Annie Lennox instead of John Lennon.



Transmutator from Infogrames – another 'exploration' program due out soon.

The idea behind hypertext is that all human knowledge is linked together. Hypertext freaks fantasise about the possibilities of vast CD-ROM databases with hypertext systems attached that would enable the user to browse throughout the whole of history, music, the arts, entertainment, and so on...a vast pageant of images, text, and music without end.

The implications of this for gamesplayers is all bound up with CDI. Imagine a game with narrative, animated action, sub-games, and endless fantasies to explore at the touch of a mouse button. That's just what companies like Cyan, the programming team started by Robyn and Rand Miller, are planning to give us...

CYAN - HEADING FOR CDI

Cyan developed *Cosmic Osmo* using Hyperdcard and *Videoworks II* for animation. Robyn Miller used the art tools within Hypercard to generate most of the pictures, a task that took around four months for the 250 backgrounds in the game, as well as numerous animation frames for the figures and interludes. The coding took an additional four months after that.'

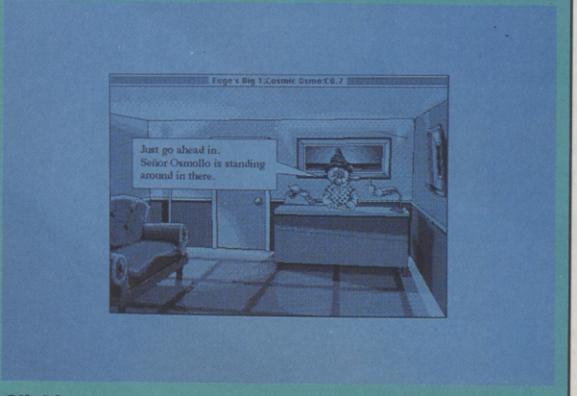
Programmer Rand Miller reckons that a project like *Osmo* would have been impossible to tackle without using an authoring system like *Hypercard:* 'We're banking on it for our future products. Because of the size of the game we wouldn't have got anywhere using a lower level language like Pascal or assembler. The authoring system enables us to put in more creativity, and when we come up against a problem we simply write an X-function (a machine code extension within *Hypercard's* scripting language) to solve it.'

CDI seems the obvious direction for Cyan to take, giving them the opportunity to include powerful animated seqences shot on film or video together with large sound files.

'Right now we're working on a new project that's twice the size of *Osmo*. Activision are writing an authoring system that should enable us to perform similar operations to those in *Hypercard* but for machines other than the Apple Mac.' This is obviously good news for us here in the UK, but apart from the IBM PC it's not yet clear which machines the new system will support. Provisionally called Gametalk, it offers colour 'hypergraphics' facilities. *Hypercard* itself is a monochrome product.

'What's limiting us,' says Rand, 'is the hardware. We want to do full colour, Disney-type worlds with full animation. We definitely need to go with the new CDI systems. Meanwhile, you can't imagine how excited we are about the future.'

After playing *Osmo,* here at ACE we're pretty excited too...


Fuge's Big 1:Cosmic Osmo:C0.7
Just go ahead in.
Señor Osmollo is standing around in there.

Clicking on the sofa arms releases a family of mice. Their squeaks, along with the secretary's digitised voice, are held in assocaited sound stacks that are clalled in using machine code extensions to the Hypercard system.

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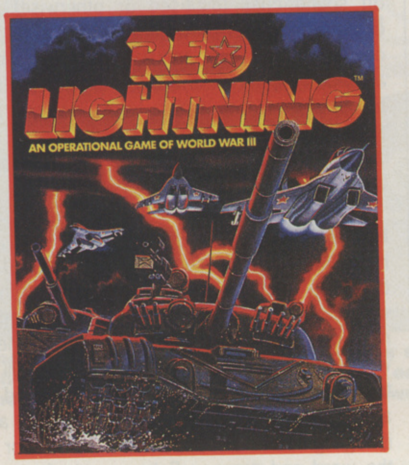
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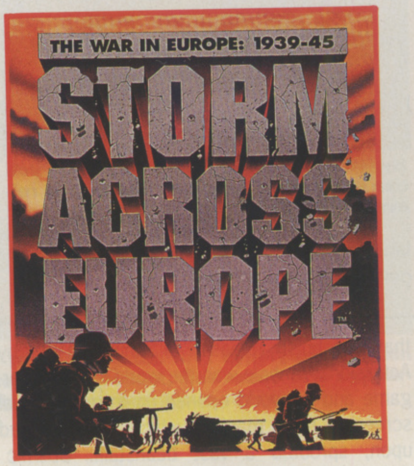

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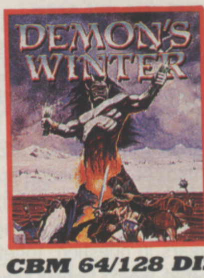

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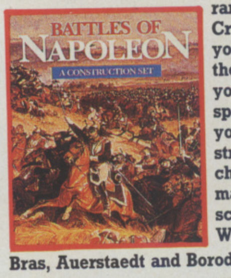

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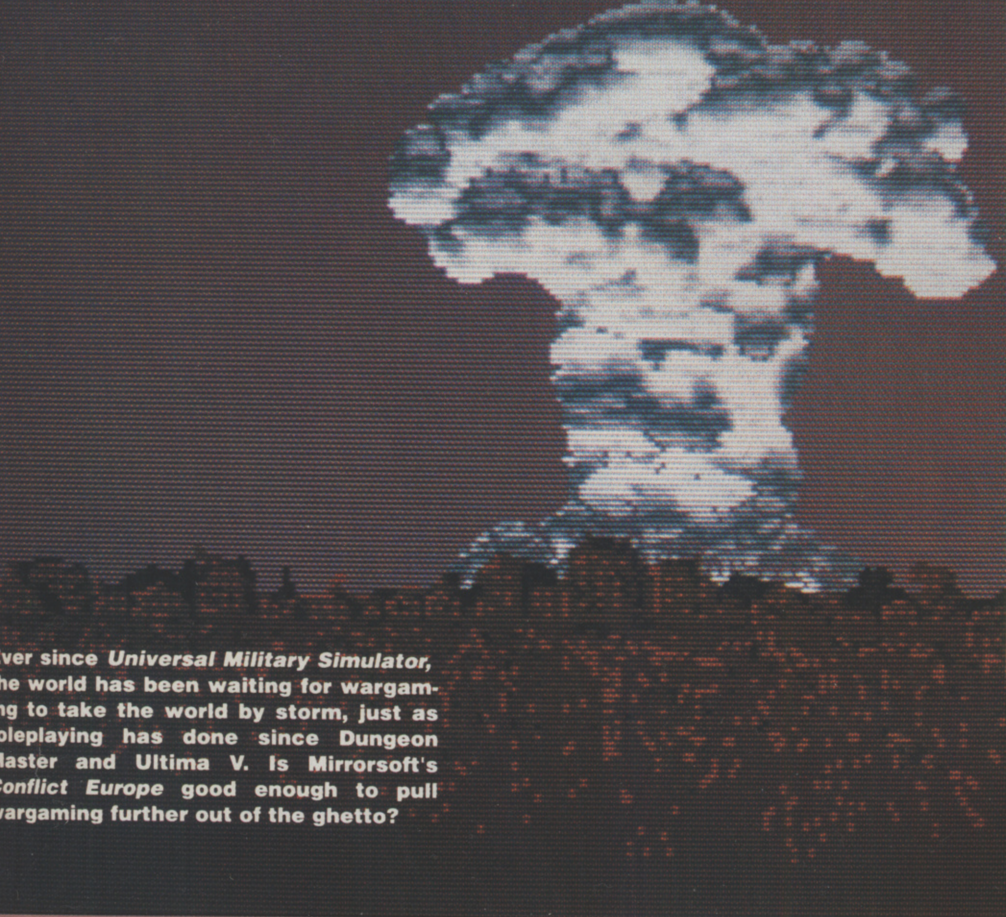
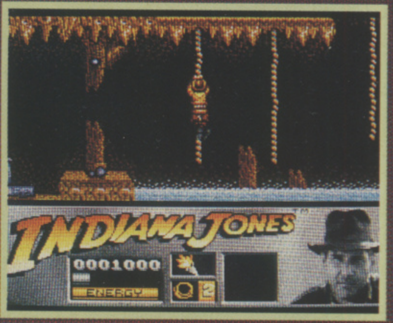
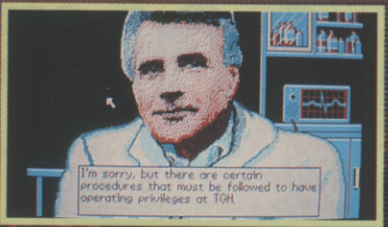
SCREEN TEST



Ever since *Universal Military Simulator*, the world has been waiting for wargaming to take the world by storm, just as roleplaying has done since Dungeon Master and Ultima V. Is Mirrorsoft's *Conflict Europe* good enough to pull wargaming further out of the ghetto?



Indiana Jones - The Last Crusade. After making a fortune at the box office, can Indiana Jones offer enough advanced computer entertainment to satisfy the ACE Team?



I'm sorry, but there are certain procedures that must be followed to have operating privileges at TGH.

Not a game for the squeamish. You've got to master diagnosis, palpitation, incision, and feelings of nausea in Life and Death, the first surgical sim from Software Toolworks.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES
This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is.

GRAPHICS
This rating considers all aspects of the game's graphics and is 'version-specific', so the limitations of each machine are taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will theree score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

AUDIO
The music and sound effects are rated here. Once again it is version-specific and a high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC.

IQ FACTOR
Just how much thought is required to get the most from the game? Shoot-em-ups are lucky to score three, while *Balance of Power* is a nine all the way. Puzzle games like *Xor* and *Boulderdash* will also score highly, but simple exploration games will not because they involve no deductive processes. Even platform games like *Nebulus* involve plenty of brain bending and therefore score well.

FUN FACTOR
Basically this is a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be *either* fun *or* intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING
This is not just plucked out of the air – it directly correlates to the area under the Predicted Interest Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious now...

100-199 ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

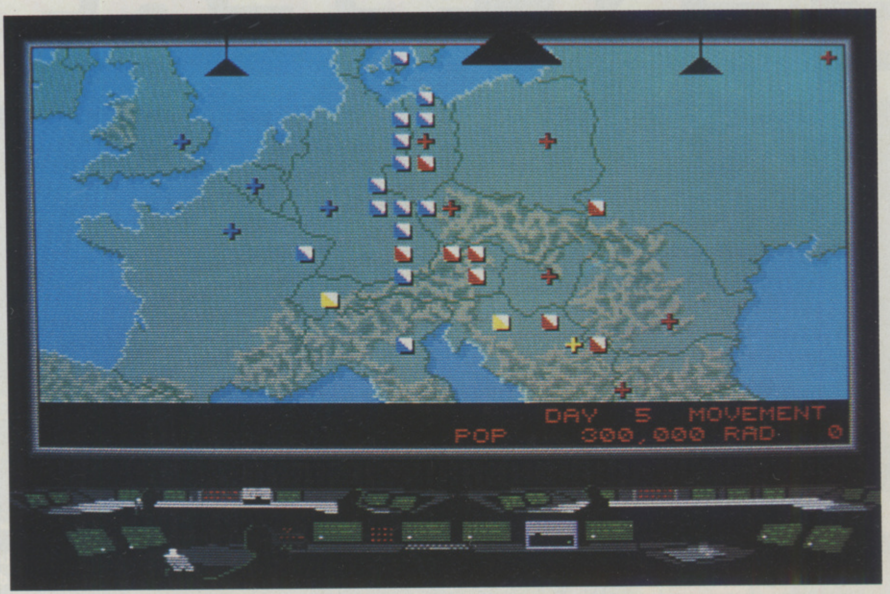
ARCADE ACCURACY
This is a measure of the competence of a conversion of a coin-op. It does not reflect on the gameplay at all, but on how close the programmers have got to the original arcade game, given the limitations of the computer it's on.

VERSION BOXES
This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE TEAM
Steve Cooke and **Pete Connor** should be familiar to ACE readers – they were the original editors of this award-winning magazine. **Pete** used to be editor of Amstrad Action and worked on Personal Computer Games before launching ACE. **Steve** is known to thousands through his many other previous identities, including Zzap!'s White Wizard, The Pilgrim, and Old Baldy.
Eugene Lacey is the man who put Britain's top-selling games magazine, C&VG, on the map. Luckily for us, Eugene got fed up with writing for 8-year olds and decided the time had come to tackle thechallenge of ACE magazine. As one of Britain's most experienced games journalists, his word is LAW.
Ciaran Brennan should need no introduction. Formerly editor of Zzap! magazine, he's now deputy editor of The One and an honorary ACE reviewer.
Julian Rignall, formerly UK Coin Op champion, former editor of Zzap!64, and the man with his name on more hi-score tables on Brighton Pier than anyone else.
Mike Pattenden is the editor of Commodore User – so he ought to know what he's talking about when it comes to C64 stuff. But he knows a thing or two about the Amiga, and is no dummy when it comes to the Atari ST, the IBM PC, the Amstrad CPC, the Nintendo, the PC Engine, the Sega, the Spectrum....and as if that weren't enough, our Mike also does a nifty little sideline in articles for The Face.
Mark Patterson has put in two and a half years of games slavery for Commodore User and C&VG and knows everything there is to know about RPGs.

Now he's a hungry cub reporter on ACE and he'll be bringing all his experienceto bear on the games that matter.

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly – now you can too.



The main command centre – the bottom of the screen shows the control monitors while the main area gives information on map and troop movement information.

CONFLICT: EUROPE

Mirrorsoft's not so soft War Sim

EUROPE takes several possible scenarios where Anglo-Soviet relationships have deteriorated to the point where open warfare is the only option. The unfortunate West German play host again as the Warsaw Pact and NATO slog it out over a thirty-day period of hostilities. Thirty days, it seems, is the most anyone can take it these days.

From your position in either the command HQ of NATO or the Warsaw pact, it's down to you to win the war for the relevant side. Despite the attractions of nuclear demonstrations of hostility, it's really your troops who carry the most weight. The eastern block starts with a more generous helping of manpower than NATO (as in real life), but the task of conquering West Germany and France is much tougher than the defence role.

The screen layout consists of a main map screen and a bank of small monitors beneath it, these are used for communications, non-army orders and information readouts. Other information available includes a readout of background radiation on the landscape and population per map square.

When you start, your units are already in place along the borderline, facing the opposition. At this point you can choose what your next step should be. Control is via the mouse, which you use to select one of the monitors, giving you control over the function represented by that monitor. Options include nuclear aggression, movement of forces, chemical attacks, negotiation, information on selected areas, and air control.

Selecting a monitor calls up a new screen depending on the option involved. For example, Monitor Three, the dreaded nuclear terminal, demands the required authorisation code and then gives you two choices: Launch Fire Mission and Reflex Strike. Fire mission launches missiles at designated targets once you have input the appropriate mission name – 'Headbutt', for example, launches a tactical nuclear strike against an enemy unit. 'Iron Fist' clobbers eight of the enemy's strongest units simultaneously.

The Special Orders monitor allows you to instruct your troops to use chemical weapons, which enhances the damage done to enemy units; employ ASAT, which knocks out enemy satellites, or send your special force troops out on a raid.

The aircraft designation monitor includes the juicy Assault Breaker option allowing a concentrated attack on a particular enemy unit of your choice. Strategic Bombing inflicts civilian casualties on the enemy. Deep Strike goes straight for the command centres, thus causing some interesting effects if sufficient numbers of planes are used.

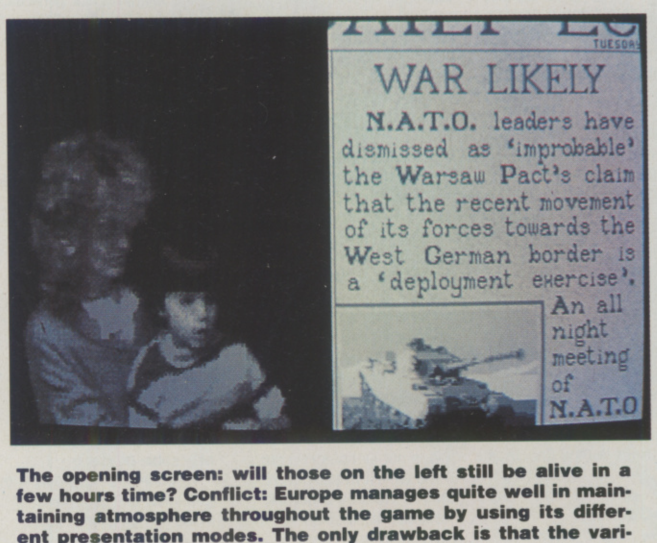
The diplomatic terminal conveys messages from other countries and lets you offer peace terms or threats to the enemy. It also displays peace offers proposed by the opposition. Following on from that is the supply read out which isn't terribly interesting, but damned useful for calculating if a weak unit can last out until supplies arrive. A vidiprinter whirs away every couple of days with reports from the army and navy sub divisions keeping you up to date with the war's progress.

All unit orders are given through the main map screen – which covers the whole of Europe and operates on an invisible grid system across which armies can be moved one square per turn, depending on the terrain. This is accomplished by simply moving the command cursor over the relevant unit and then clicking on it with the mouse button and then clicking on its destination.

Once you're in position, you can start attacking. The command cursor is used to select the targets you wish to attack provided they are in the next adjacent square. Any number of units in range can be used to gang up on a single unit, usually with a devastating effect. Then the report comes up. Corresponding to the results of the battles units are either left untouched. automatically retreated, or erased from the map in the case of decimation. This applies to both sides.

The computer is a formidable opponent who will fight to the finish, though not nearly as advanced a tactition as UMS, opting for the more simplistic, direct approach to its role, rather than complex attacks and counter strikes and moves generated by UMS' advanced system. But what it lacks in the artificial intelligence department is quite readily disguised by the slick presentation and massed array of options open to the player.

Throughout the game figures are flitting in front of the main command screen bringing reports back and forth, a small touch which improves the presentation no end, along with

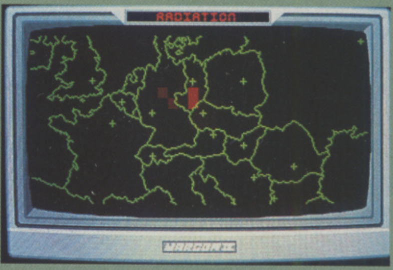


WAR LIKELY

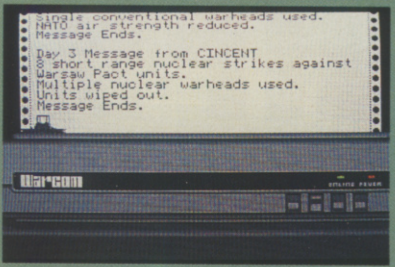
N.A.T.O. leaders have dismissed as 'improbable' the Warsaw Pact's claim that the recent movement of its forces towards the West German border is a 'deployment exercise'. An all night meeting of N.A.T.O

The opening screen: will those on the left still be alive in a few hours time? Conflict: Europe manages quite well in maintaining atmosphere throughout the game by using its different presentation modes. The only drawback is that the variety of presentation does not, in the long term, conceal the slightly repetitive gameplay.

A nuclear attack has been launched. Now we see a graphics display of the famous mushroom cloud billowing tons of radioactive dust into the atmosphere.



The radiation report screen. In all the post-nuclear war scenarios, radiation puts forward a severe threat. Staying on a radioactive location will seriously damage and limit the capabilities of the unit. Civilian casualties will also increase rapidly in radiation "hot spots"



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Single conventional warheads used.
NATO air strength reduced.
Message Ends.

Day 3 Message from CINCENT
8 short range nuclear strikes against
Warsaw Pact units.
Multiple nuclear warheads used.
Units wiped out.
Message Ends.
```

And finally the war report. In this case land army command informs you that in the aftermath of the nuclear strike all eight of the intended targets were wiped out. No mention of civilian fatalities – don't want to make this too realistic, do we?

pictures of nuclear destruction when the appropriate warhead hits a target. The sound is another good atmosphere inducing factor, explosions and sirens rocket and wail throughout with many other bumps and whines cropping up at the right moments.

At the end of a game you are given a percentage command assessment with the amount of civilian casualties, the civilians hit list is not the thing to aim for. Remember what Einstein said, "regardless of what world war three is fought with, world war four will be decided with rocks and clubs".

Conflict: Europe is an excellent wargame which should appeal to beginners as well as experienced players. Conflict Europe should help set a standard for wargames to come.

● Mark Patterson

AMIGA VERSION

Right from the start the slick graphical effects and presentation along with atmospheric sound effects draw the player into the game. Throughout Conflict:Europe serves up the right balance of strategy excitement to produce a high quality, lasting game.

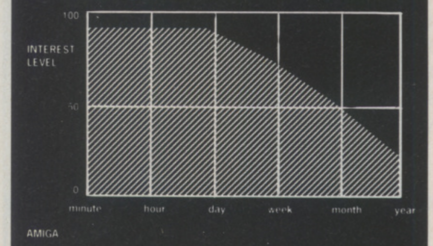
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 882

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99dk	TBA

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Like all games of this genre, it has good long-term interest, but Conflict: Europe falls foul of repetitive gameplay in the end.

WARGAMES: DESTINED FOR GLORY?

In the beginning early computer wargames served more towards the strategy/RPG side of the field. Then, around 1983, companies like PSS started to produce ranges of high quality comprehensive wargames. The general approach was of a plan map with small icons to represent troop movements. Computer intellignece, when it came to handling of the opposition, was admirable though prone to some illogical acts.

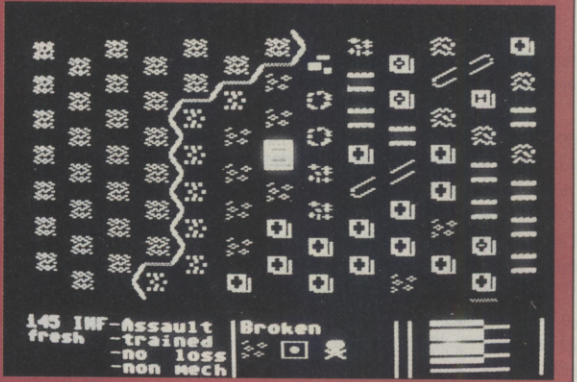
SSI was the next step up the tree. Utilising the same graphics format as their predecessors, the SSI software went into far greater historical depth and accuracy to reproduce some of the most famous battles of the last three centuries. Their software also included a much needed user-design and alteration option, though limited by the game scenario.

Following on from the in-built game design feature SSI went on to release Wargame Construction kit. Initially fun, the novelty of the kit soon wore off with the lack of real depth and involvement of the participants.

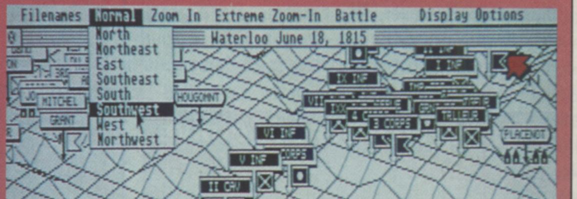
Then in 1987 the revolution came with a game called UMS. It featured 3D vector graphics which gave a better idea of the terrain the units followed. A more comprehensive list of commands, and best of all the computer intelligence could be relied upon to produce some very sophisticated encounters. Excellent concepts which were very well implemented.

What next? It seems now that various elements need to be combined to produce what could be loosely termed as the 'ultimate wargame'. UMS features the superior intellect, Conflict Europe has the presentation, and SSI has the historical accuracy and depth to join the features together, taking advantage of multitasking and/or CD-Rom to inject even greater levels of realism.

With the progress in the last two years it shouldn't be long before wargames follow RPG's and break out of it's selective 'ghetto' market.



Halls of Montezuma from SSI traces the history of the US Marine Corps and is typical of the more recent SSI titles, which have progressed in scenario terms but little in terms of graphical presentation.



UMS - combining its vector-graphics landscaping with powerful control and report options.

LIFE & DEATH

Diagnosing SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS' medical simulation.

HERE'S an unusual computer game - instead of snuffing out lives you have to save them. To put you in the mood, Software Toolworks have even enclosed your very own rubber gloves and surgeon's mask. Tack-y!

It takes guts to be a doctor - and it helps to have them if you're a patient too. This hospital specialises in abdominal complaints, from appendicitis to the removal of excess navel fluff. It's not all knife work, though. There are the mysteries of diagnosis to master before you dive in.

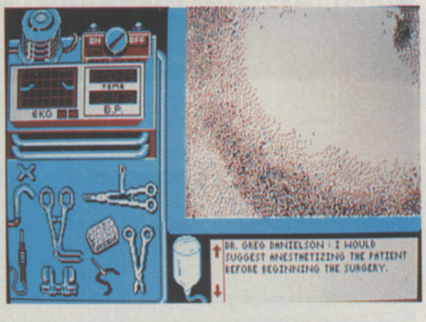
There's also a lengthy installation routine, which gives you time to skim through the accompanying manuals, if not actually attend medical school. Providing you don't mind learning on the job, there's no need to digest everything before you slice into some patient's digestive tract. You're an intern at a teaching hospital and the tutors will tell you what you did wrong even before they've binned the body!

It may disobey the basic laws of hygiene but mice are positively encouraged in this hospital - though you can use the number keys to click on various doors, options and surgical tools. But undoubtedly it's easier to grab that transfusion quicker with a rodent.

You start your rounds in the main corridor where a nurse tells you where your next patient is. Enter their room by clicking on the door then consult the admission notes by selecting the clipboard at the bottom of the bed. Now it's time for some hands-on diagnosis, so move the pointer around their abdomen, palpitating areas as you go.

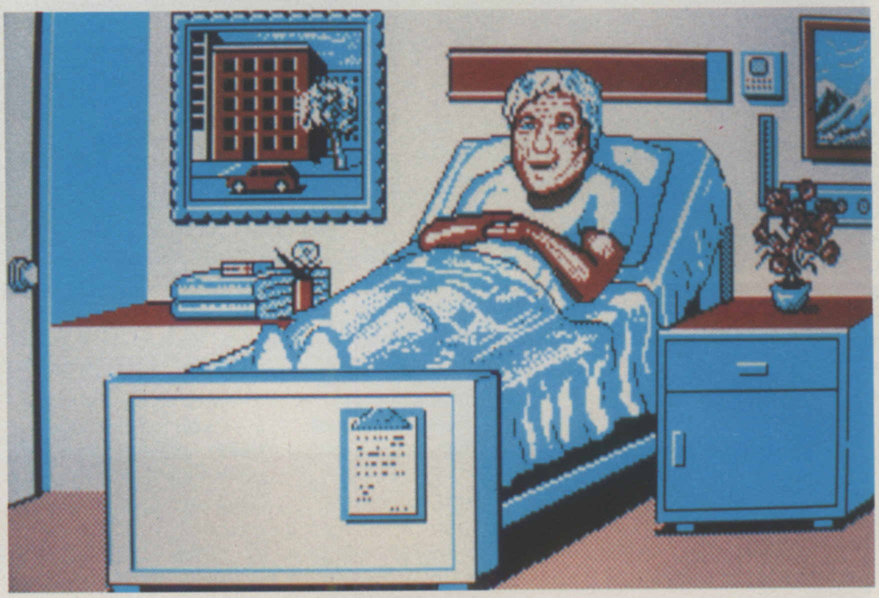
You can then decide to leave them for observation, prescribe drugs, or go for the X-Ray or Ultrasonic Scan - though don't use these expensive techniques too liberally or you'll be in for a sarcastic ticking off. Having studied all the facts you may decide to refer the patient to a specialist or go for gore in the Operating Theatre.

Before you scrub up you can pick your two assistants. Each of the available staff has their own area of speciality, and will offer advice as you proceed. But there's also an element of soap opera as some don't work well with others following failed romances and business schemes.



DR. GREG DANIELSON : I WOULD SUGGEST ANESTHETIZING THE PATIENT BEFORE BEGINNING THE SURGERY.

This is no time to feel faint! Grab that scalpel and if in doubt - cut it out!



You'll be out of here in no time (probably in a box!).

Surgery's one place where you need to be prepared because there's precious little time to read the manual while you're strolling down the liver (though you can pause the action). Perhaps there could be a little more in the way of diagrams in the manuals. Do you know just where to cut to get at an inflamed appendix?

Surgery is the high spot of Life and Death and it's not easy. Cadaver follows cadaver before you get it right and, despite my sawbones cynicism, I quickly became involved. Losing my first patient (before I even got my gloves on!) was heartbreaking.

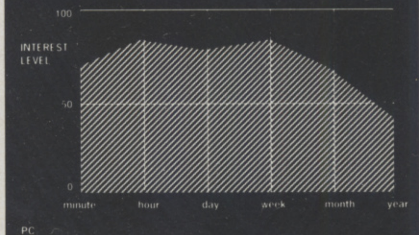
But it may all be rather too forbidding at first. This initial difficulty helps compensate for the fact that, once you've mastered the basic techniques, the constant round of grumbling appendices and aneurysm grafts may become repetitive. There are three difficulty levels, though.

The spot sound effects and brief tunes are reasonable. We particularly liked the sampled screams as you probe a painful spot during diagnosis. However, the graphics are a great let down - everybody gets the CGA colour scheme. Still, when you consider all those guts in VGA, this could be a blessing!

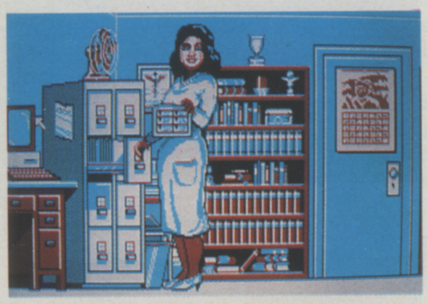
Despite these reservations, this is a novel program which plays upon our innate fears of illness and fascination with medical procedures. If you persevere through the early stages, it could be a lifesaver for those who thought simulations ended with F-16s.

● John Minson

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Tough to get into, but persistence plays dividends for today's privatised doctors.



General Hospital raises its head when you choose your assistants.

PC VERSION

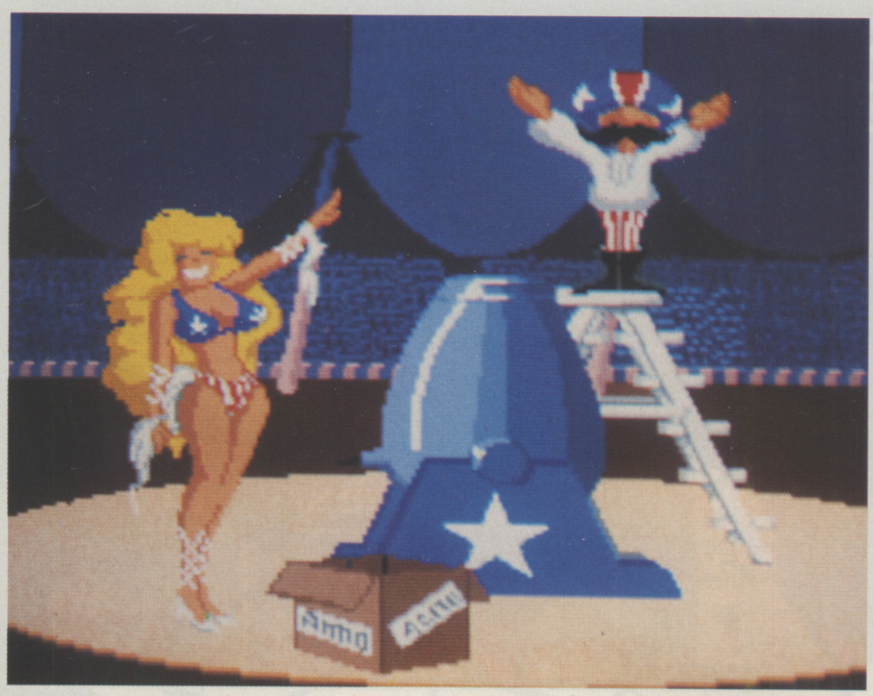
A unique subject, though more should have been made of the graphics. Playable with the keyboard but better suited to mouse operation.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**9**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 882

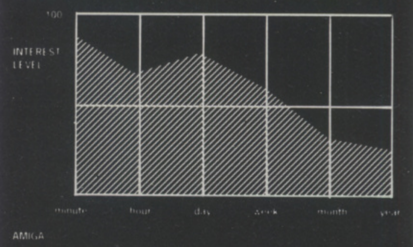
RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£TBA	Late '89.
MAC	£29.99dk	August
IBM PC	£24.99dk	Out Now



Fly through the air with the greatest of ease in the human cannonball stunt, but don't expect a head-up display!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Tremendous initial excitement, dampened by disk swapping, but once you get used to the delays it bears up fairly well

FIENDISH FREDDIE

MINDSCAPE go over the Big Top...

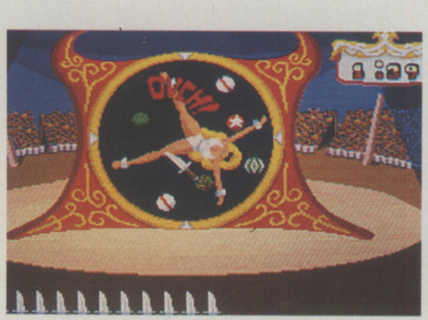
CHRIS Grey will be remembered for his work on the C64, for designing Boulderdash and the original Infiltrator, two classic games for the machine. *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun* marks his debut on the Amiga and it demonstrates a craftmanship that, as good as those games were, he never showed before.

Fiendish Freddy has been two years in production, and marks the first release from Chris's new company Gray Matter. It's a multi-event circus game, but that description doesn't do it justice, the touches and loving detail lavished upon it take it into a different league than the other rash of big top games that have appeared recently.

The scene is set by one of those short sequences you see in arcade games - you know, gang appear and ruthlessly gun down your girlfriend. In this case a huge extended limousine rolls up outside the tent from which a note is handed warning the owner that the bank are foreclosing on their loan rather swiftly. To save the Big Top you have to find $10,000 by tomorrow. The only way you can do that is by some death defying stunts to pull in the crowds. The type of events you're asked to perform would be enough to decimate the Moscow State Circus, even without the presence of Fiendish Freddy, an evil stooge planted to make sure the stunts don't come off.

There are six events: high diving into a tub of water, unicycle juggling, trapeze, knife-throwing, tightrope walking and the human cannonball. Each effort is judged by a team of clowns and their marks are converted into cash - make enough and you save the circus. To pull off each of the stunts requires timing and joystick movement much like any other sim, but there's the added problem of Fiendish himself, turning up midway through your act and doing his level best to throw a spanner in the works. Thus, as you attempt to cross the high wire the lights go out, Freddy appears as you slip and slowly unplucks your fingers from the wire as your character holds on for dear life. That's Freddy's idea of being funny, you see.

What really separates this from any number of multi-event games is the graphics. The game is impressively programmed throughout, but where it really excells is in its graphics. The characters are large and superbly animated. They represent some of the best cartoon graphics ever produced on the Amiga. Furthermore the game is rich in the kind of genuinely amusing touches that go into a cartoon. It deserves the comparison.



Working out your aggression in the knife throwing event...

There is a price to play for this lavish attention. Fiendish Freddy is reminiscent of Roger Rabbit for the amount of disk swapping involved to create the kind of effects it does. It doesn't require as many changes, but there are three disks and you can find yourself waiting for a good minute between each event. It's still too much to be comfortable with. No matter how good a product is, disk swapping is a tedious business.

Despite the very high level of presentation, the gameplay in *Fiendish Freddie* is simply not diverse or deep enough to justify the constant swapping of disks. Nevertheless Gray Matter is a production company worth keeping an eye on – quality of this kind deserves to succeed.

● Mike Pattenden

AMIGA VERSION

Fiendish Freddy represents the kind of game that you bought your Amiga for, but whilst its gorgeous graphics and neat sound effects produce a complete cartoon experience, the amount of disk swapping is barely acceptable.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**5**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 775

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£29.99	IMMINENT

GUESS WHO'S COMING
TO SAVE THE WORLD AGAIN?

ACTIVISION

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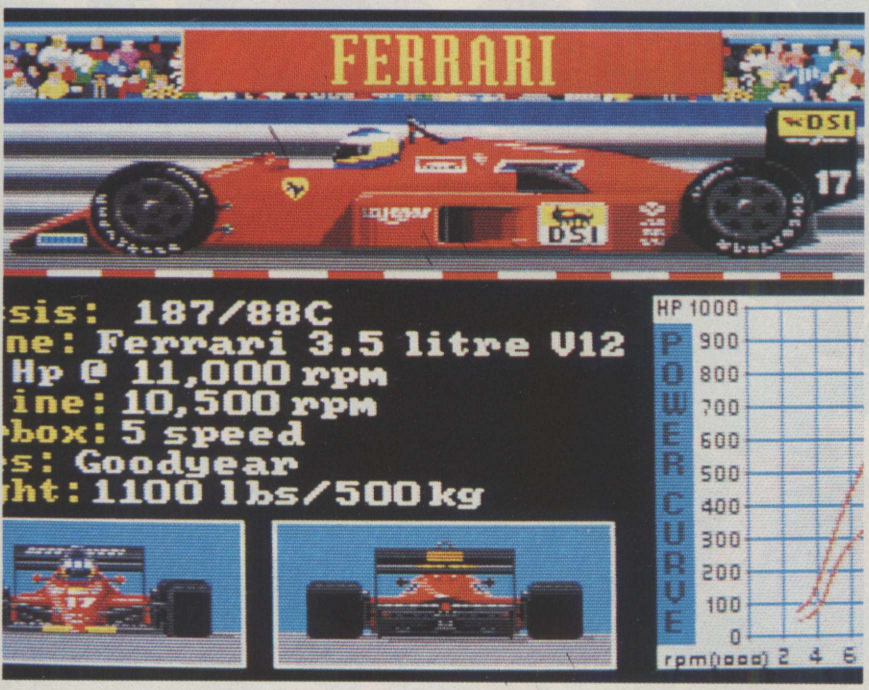
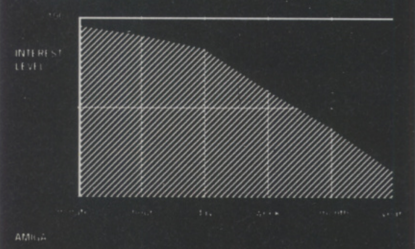


sis: 187/88C
ne: Ferrari 3.5 litre V12
Hp @ 11,000 rpm
ine: 10,500 rpm
box: 5 speed
s: Goodyear
ht: 1100 lbs/500 kg

Select the team you wish to race for. But don't just go for the colours – check the car's performance as well.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



You won't be able to switch off once you've started – but over the distance you interest may begin to wane.

GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

ACCOLADE wave the chequered flag

IF you're under the age of sixteen you could be forgiven for thinking that the British exponents of motor racing spend most of their time ploughing into walls, blowing tires and stripping gears. Yes, it's a far cry from the days of James Hunt and Stirling Moss.

For any driver in the sport the ultimate accolade is to crowned as the world champion. *Grand Prix Circuit* gives you the opportunity to don a helmet and fireproofs and burn rubber around ten of the world championship circuits.

AMIGA VERSION

Ease of control and uncomplicated play make Grand Prix simple good fun. The graphics aren't stunning but they do the job well, with good looking cars and a nice tunnel routine complete with overhead lights. The updating routine used to give the road a feeling of speed could use a few more frames as it's slightly slow and jerky. Meaty sound effects are put to great use as you hear the opposing cars roar past.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	9

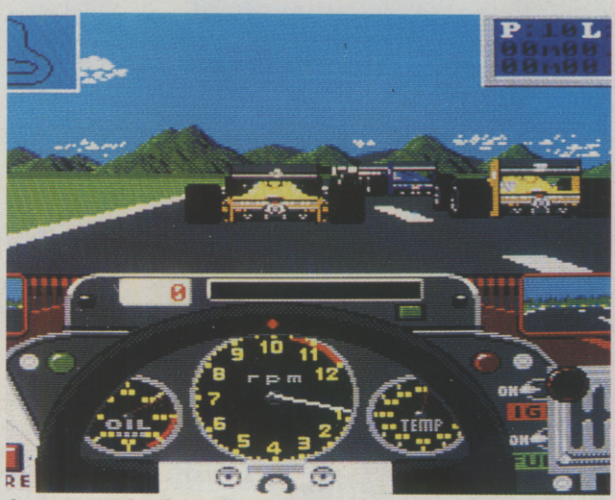
ACE RATING 801

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£14.95cs	IMMINENT

Like the best of the rest the only way you can get a car and get into a race is to be signed up to one of the big three teams, McLaren, Williams and the perennial favourite Ferrari. Adopt the colours and you're given their best car. And it's the car you're given that makes the big difference; one team's car might just be a speed demon that will fail to take any corners, another will have marginally more traction to help it take corners better.

As in the real world you have to qualify for your position on the starting grid. More often than not there is always somebody faster than you, but don't be put off by the ultra-fast qualifying times – they can't often match that grade in the final race.



As soon as the lights flash green the race is go. Don't go too fast or you're

When the lights change to green it's not a good idea to put your foot down for a fast start although it is easy enough – a sharp jab forwards on the stick will suffice. The cars practically crawl off the line being ultra careful not to end up in the pits through knocking into each other. Eventually, though, the field spreads out with the car in pole position on the grid often pulling away from the rest of the field.

Lapping slow coaches is awkward because the computer treats them as if they were the race leader – they will insist on swerving into your path and generally behaving in an aggressive manner. The easiest way to overtake tends to be on a corner or a chicane where the computer cars have to hug all the corners but where you can drive straight through.

I was very impressed with the way that the programmers handled the difficulty aspect. It is really easy to learn and progress through out the levels although there is no real visual change.

While *RVF* and *Super Hang On* are faster and smoother *Grand Prix* is an actual car simulator which gives an improved feeling of road worthiness with a simple back/forward speed control and left/right steering on the joystick. On the negative side it's rather simplistic with only ten races and a limited pit stop feature – areas where it fails to match up to the complexities of EA's *Ferrari Formula* . but *Grand Prix* is an easier game to play, and you can get your kicks a bit quicker. Even if you don't have the racing bug it's worth trying the speed demon tactics of *Grand Prix*.

● Mark Patterson

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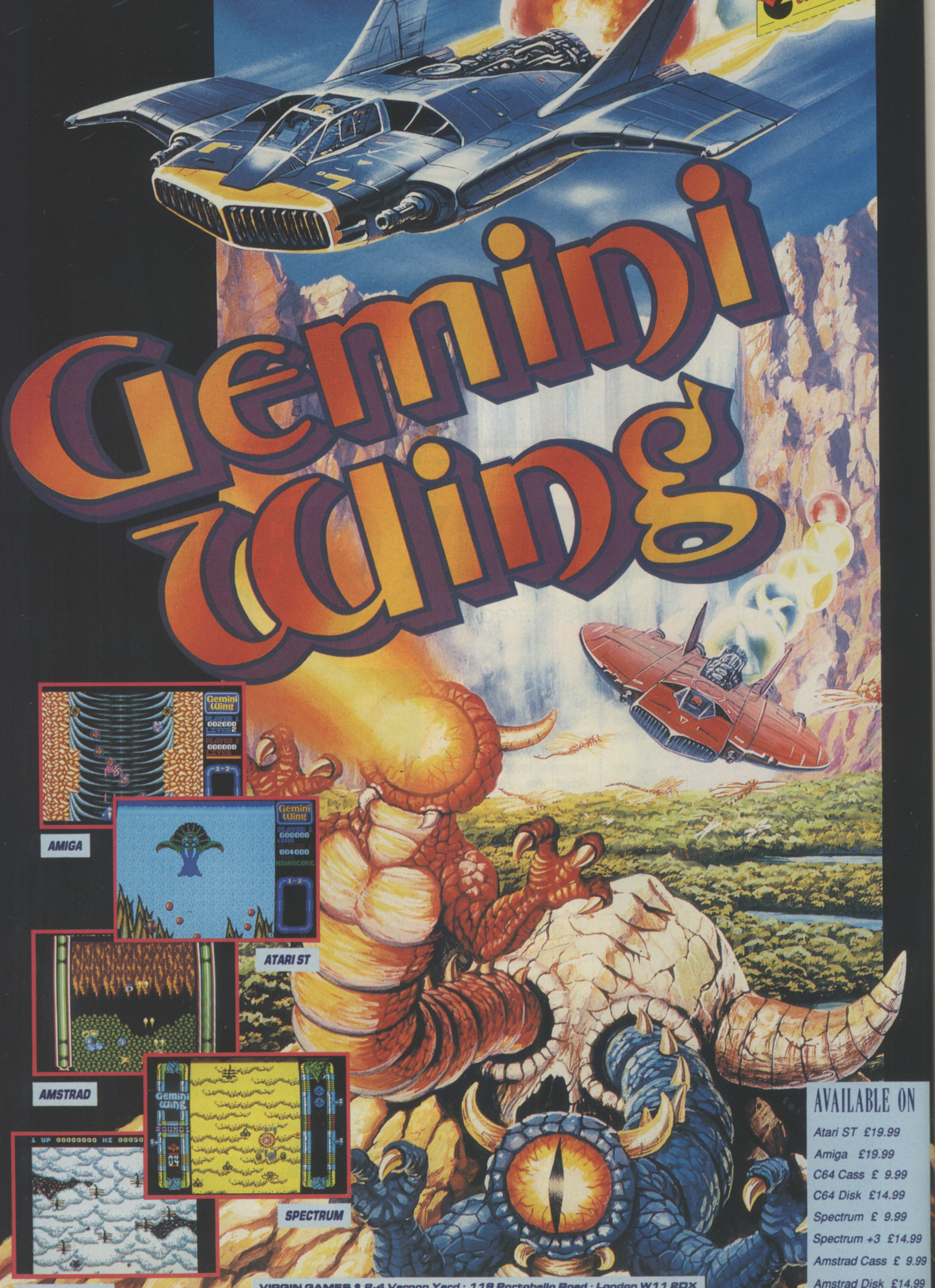
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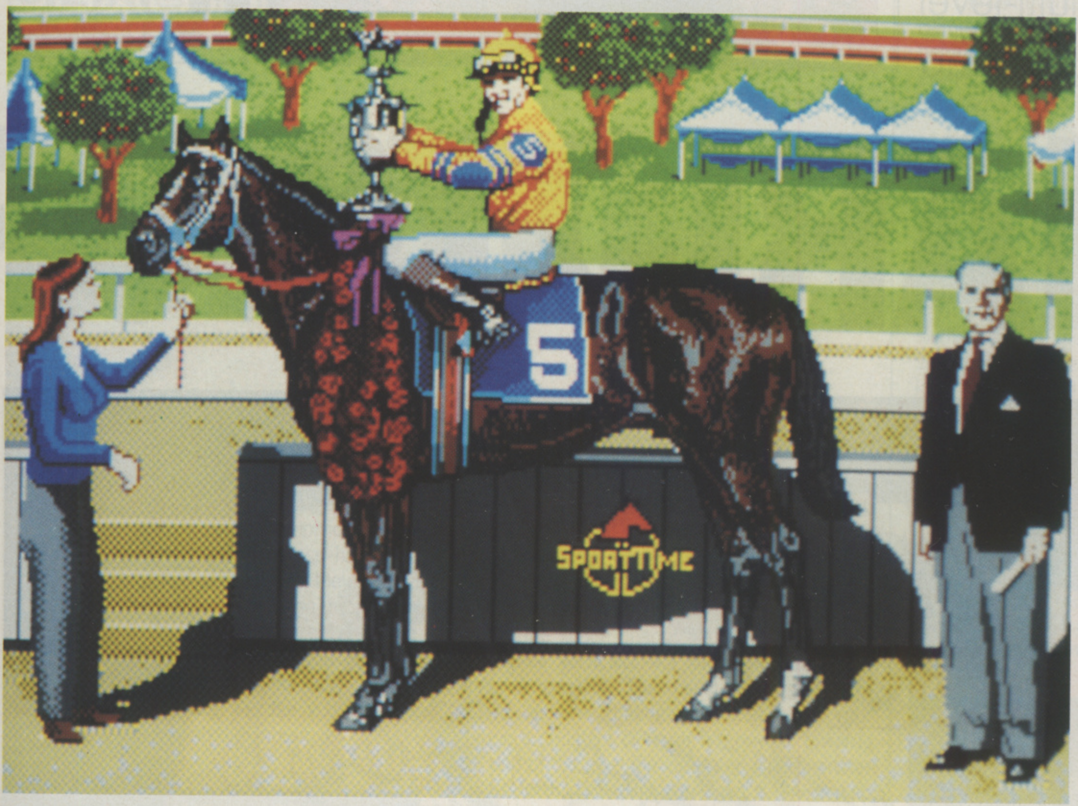
HORSE RACING

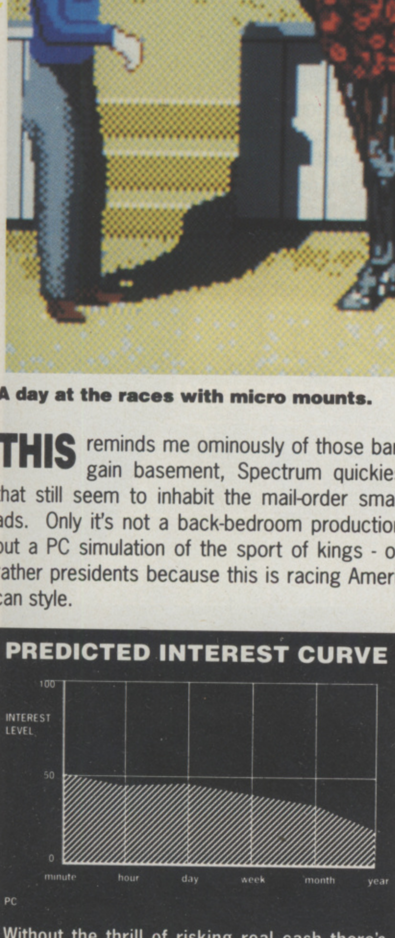
SPORTTIME takes time off at the race track.



A day at the races with micro mounts.

THIS reminds me ominously of those bargain basement, Spectrum quickies that still seem to inhabit the mail-order small ads. Only it's not a back-bedroom production but a PC simulation of the sport of kings - or rather presidents because this is racing American style.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Without the thrill of risking real cash there's little attraction in this simulation.

SportTime is designed for those who are partial to putting the odd fiver in the bookie's pocket, which is, after all, where the real excitement in horse racing is to be found. The challenge of the program lies in picking winners and swelling your bank balance. But whether watching PC gee-gees make you millions of imaginary dollars or hobbling away with your shirt will get your adrenalin flowing is another matter.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
Other versions will follow but there are no details available.		

PC VERSION

The PC still has to win its spurs in the animation and sound department – and the hardware certainly doesn't help. Horse Racing isn't going to change the machine's reputation.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 520

Game presentation is as attractive as Ascot Ladies Day, starting with the 'OMNI Screen' option selection, which allows you to load either the basic 'Handicapper's Tournament' or other modules which will be made available. In fact the whole game takes less effort than filling in a William Hill betting slip. Just click on your choice of items and occasionally type in a few figures, leaving you to concentrate on the strategy.

Your aim is to beat a selection of race track types, all possessed of varying levels of expertise, in a race to raise your bank account to a certain amount or to win as much as possible over a specified number of races. Up to four of your opponents can be human, which undoubtedly adds to the fun, while the computer provides the others.

Having established the type of competition you go to the track where you can look up form, check on the jockeys' performance and even buy tips from a variety of shady characters. Naturally the cheaper the 'heard it from the horses' mouth', the more likely the nag had halitosis. Having weighed up everything, you place your bet and watch the race.

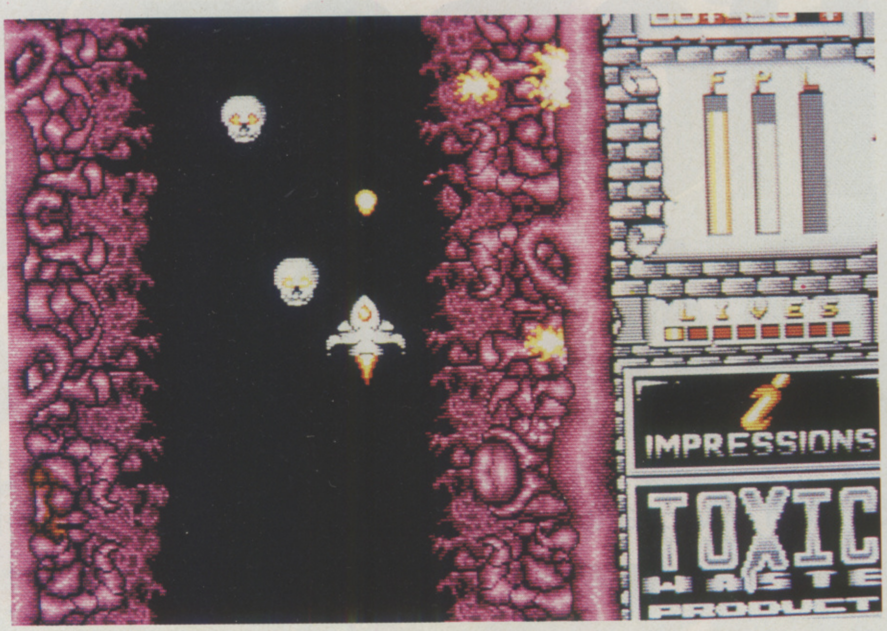
The animated action is seen side-on along the straight, while the corners are seen from a hovering helicopter and amazingly the horses change into numbers as they enter the turn. There's also a display of who's in which position as a substitute for Brough Scott's commentary.

Surrounding the race itself are a selection of still screens though after the first few times you're liable to yawn through such masterpieces as the Starting Gate and Winner's Circle. A further irritation is that American betting is very different from the options offered by your local Ladbrokes, making it all seem even more distant.

In the end it comes down to the fact that in real life the winners and losers are not just determined by statistics. 250-1 no-hopers will romp home every so often, favourites will follow the field. Though Horse Racing includes such random factors, I was always conscious that a computer was generating every result - and betting imaginary money against a microchip just doesn't turn me on. It's the element of fate that makes real racing so addictive and that just can't be simulated!

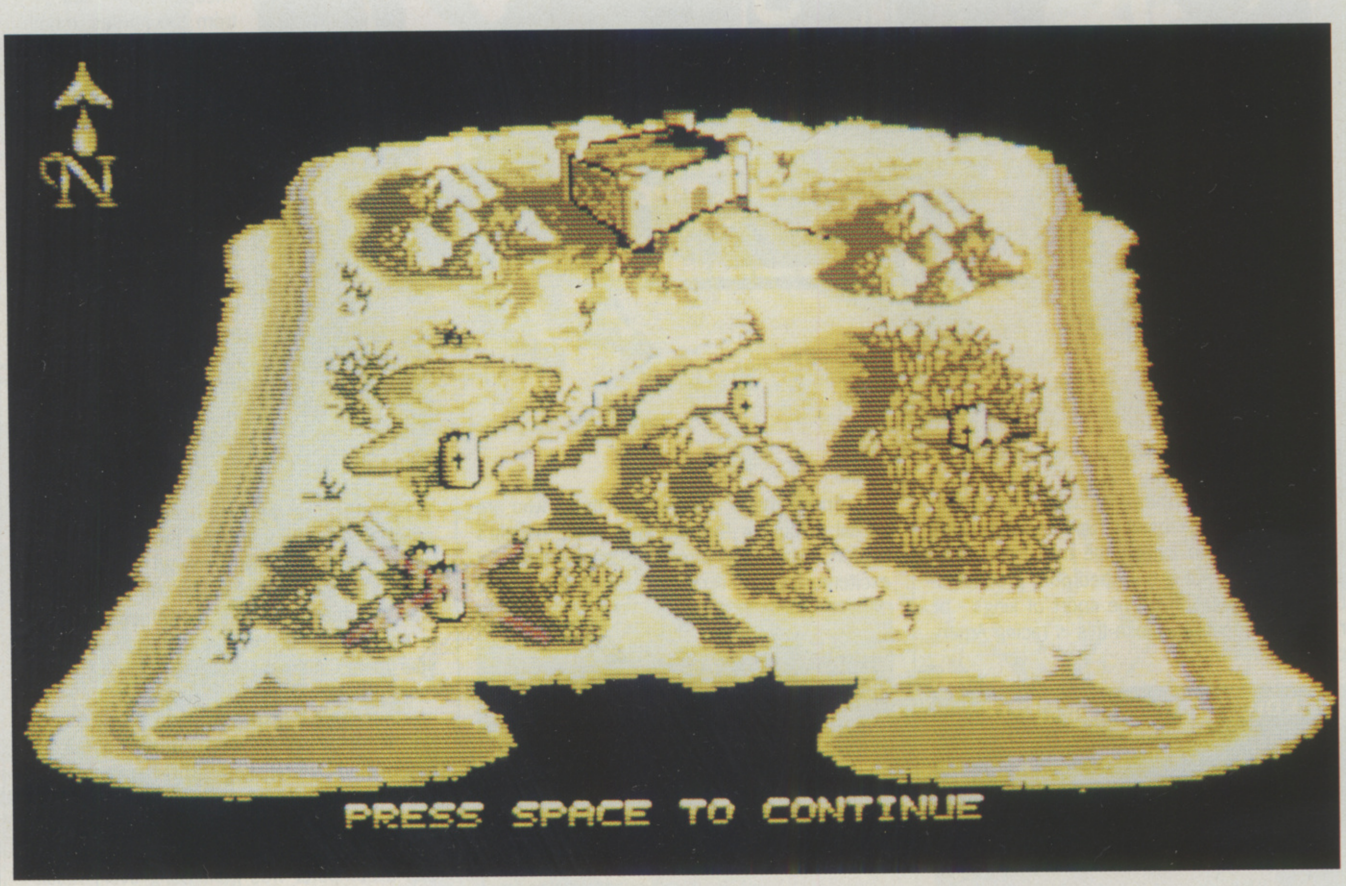
● John Minson

Three plane parallax scrolling looks neat but that end level nasty is easily bested. Good job more arcade fun is to follow - like the Arkanoid screen, the Dungeonmaster shoot 'em up type screen, Platform screen, Asteroids screen and one final challenge that IMPRESSIONS would like ACE to keep secret. Psst...it's the one you have to do before you rescue the glamorous, pouting etc, princess.



IMPRESSIONS make a strong one with this multi-level arcade romp

CHARIOTS OF



X' marks your progress – and is updated at the end of each level.

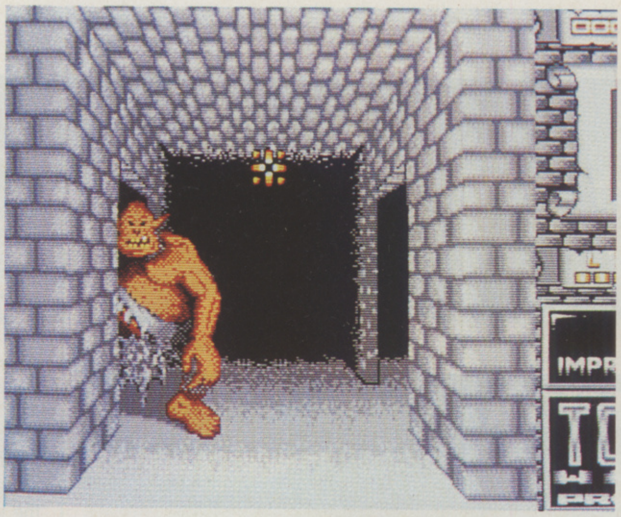
PRINCE Agar has gone over the top once too often in battle. He's a sort of Vinny Jones of computer games – so the king gives him a red card and confines him to palace duties. It's not his scene really. Running to the shops for the ladies in waiting. Taking the royal dogs for a walk. It's driving him up the ramparts. So when her royalness – Princess Arthena – is kidnapped by the evil Baron, Agar doesn't hesitate to don his battle gear and set off on a rescue mission.

What all this tosh provides dubious literary

WRATH

justification for is a multi-event arcade challenge. It's well presented with a map hewn out of stone showing you your starting point – with the various castles and woods that have to be visited en-route and the Baron's fortress in the distant north.

Each time an event is completed the map appears again marking your progress with an 'X'. This type of graphical progress report was made popular in *Outrun*. They lend a sense of purpose to all the blasting and platform leaping – and work particularly well in *Chariots of Wrath*. You really want to see that 'X' on top of the Baron's fortress – however long it takes.



Chariots of Wrath – looks like an RPG – but plays like a shoot 'em up.

The games themselves are fairly simple but very well executed arcade action, beginning with a shoot out in the castle dungeons. Various monsters peer out from the corridors. You have to quickly position your cross hair over them and let them have it before they dodge back behind the stone walls. The more you shoot determines the amount of fire power you will have in the next challenge. You have to shoot every single monster to stay in the game. Hesitate too long and the you will find your blood splattered on the screen.

Game number two is an *Arkanoid* clone. It's hellishly addictive and even adds a few original twists – like a power ball that cuts through the tiles whilst you can keep it in play. All the old favourites are there too like the double ball, slow motion ball, and smart bomb ball that wipes the whole screen and lets you get on to the next challenge.

Best challenge of all is the shoot 'em up. Hop in the space chariot and start blasting as you scroll vertically. It's the power ups that make it special. The usual wing guns are added, as are rotating guns that circle your ship in a constant circle of fire power. Towards the end of the level the inevitable giant monster sallies forth. Providing you have a few power-ups you will have no problem dispatching it. One of the weapons is completely deadly – it spews forth giant white disks of fire. A few direct hits and the nasty crumbles in flames. The only weakness with this shoot 'em up is the end of level nasty; it really ought to have been a bit tougher.

You know that the shoot 'em up part of *Chariots* has to be good when you learn that Mirrorsoft were less than pleased about certain resemblances to *Xenon II* and insisted on some changes. Anything that could have been considered to look or play remotely like a *Xenon* must be worth checking out – and indeed it is.

Another whirr of the disk drive – and challenge number four appears. It's a platform test in which you have to gather as many power crystals as possible and once again it's pretty well presented. Jumps have to be timed carefully and the route you take given careful consideration.

Certain events repeat before you reach the Baron's fortress – but they are tougher than before – keeping the skill requirement up. Six events are offered in total – each one a high standard game in its own right.

Sound effects and music are well blended with the arcade action. They are there but you don't notice them until you stop and listen or turn them off – always a good sign.

Chariots has had a lot of thought put into it. It's well programmed and offers an addictive and entertaining arcade challenge. There's plenty of depth so the game should last. The only slight gripe is the price. £24.99 is a lot to spend on arcade entertainment – even if it does keep you up until the dawn chorus add their voice to the sound FX emanating from your computer.

● Eugene Lacey

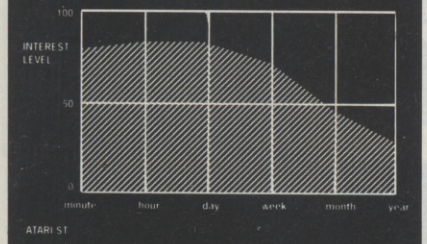
ATARI ST VERSION

Offers very smooth scrolling – particularly in the vertical shoot 'em up level with 'three plane parallax scrolling'. A first for the ST. Each game is a separate load – but boots automatically when a level is complete and takes only a few seconds.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	7
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 823

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

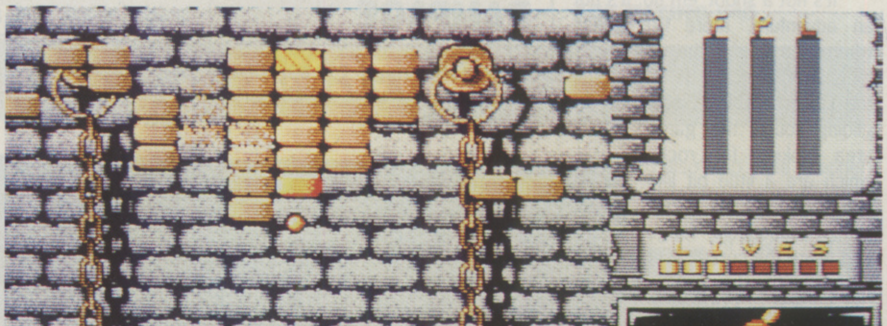


At first glance a simple arcade game, but the interest level rises and is well maintained.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

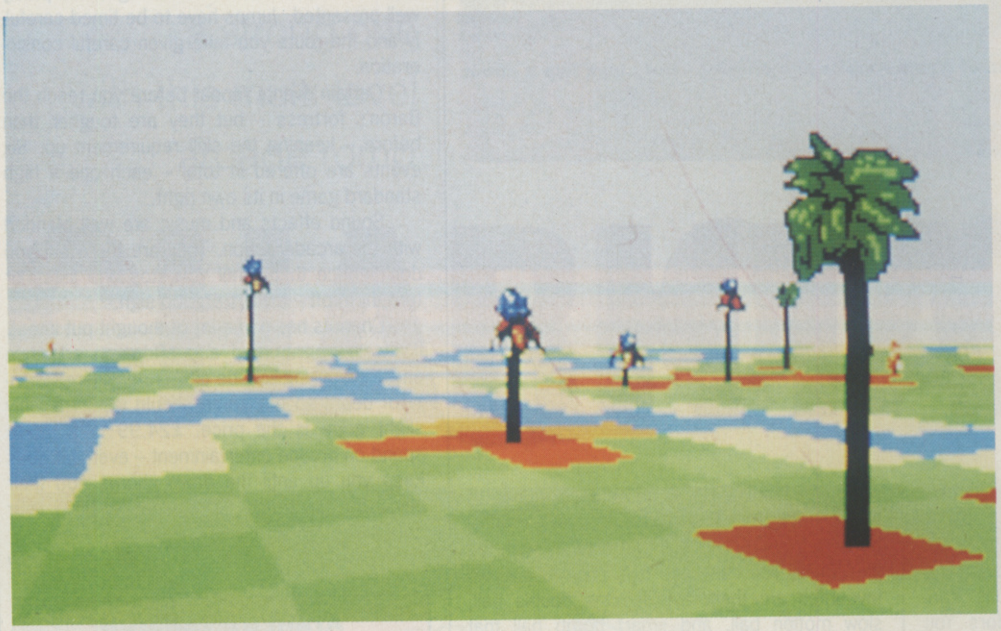
No other versions planned



Catch that 'S' to wipe the screen and progress to the next level.

UPDATES

AMIGA



ARCHIPELAGOS

Logotron Amiga £24.95: ST version Reviewed May issue Ace Rating 910

Just as Sentinel was a revolutionary product when it was first released three years Archipelagos is using that claim to fame now.

It's not a shoot 'em up, it's not an adventure, more like chess where you go for the opponent's King. The objective is to destroy the Obelisk. This is achieved by gliding round the game area looking for rocks which are a little bit like sub-Obelisks. Find a rock within reasonable range and place the cursor over it, using the fire button which will then collapse it. This process is repeated with all the other stones on the landscape until only the Obelisk remains. When the last stone is destroyed a timer starts counting down the seconds remaining to get to the Obelisk and destroy it before it destroys you.

Archipelagos features some fantastic colouration and smooth graphics (VGA mode), and there's over nine thousand landscapes to explore. A fantastic game which blows away the cobwebs of traditional games playing.

ACE RATING: 910

RAMPAGE

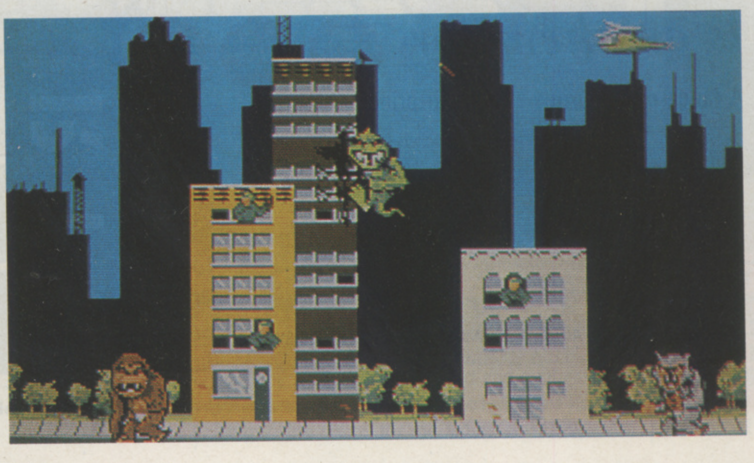
Activision Amiga £19.99: C64 version reviewed February 1988 Ace rating 887

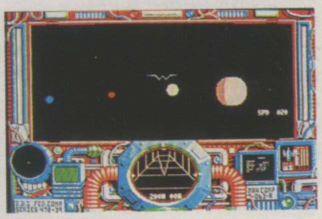
Talk about a wait! A year and a half – and it was worth every week of it.

The plot is very simple: three people, three radiation overdoses, three transmutations and, ultimately, three monsters hell-bent on the destruction of each and every city they find.

Amiga Rampage is excellent. Three players, arcade graphics, snazzy sound, and great gameplay wrap up an enjoyable destructive romp.

ACE RATING 925





FOFT

Gremlin Amiga £24.99dk: ST version Reviewed May Issue ACE rating 507

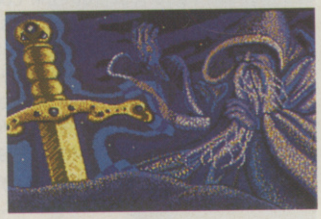
FOFT on the ST was widely criticized, partly because of bugs and the lack of a decent save feature. The Amiga version, on the other hand, has had all the nasty features removed.

The basic game, however, remains the same, a space trade/shoot 'em up in the mold of Elite.

The extended music now comes with the main program so there is only one disc as opposed to two. The graphics are smooth and fast. Gameplay is severely limited by the bad control method on the ship – it takes a few seconds for your ship to slow out of a turn which limits your battle prowess.

Only really recommended to fans of this game style.

ACE RATING 560



ARTHUR

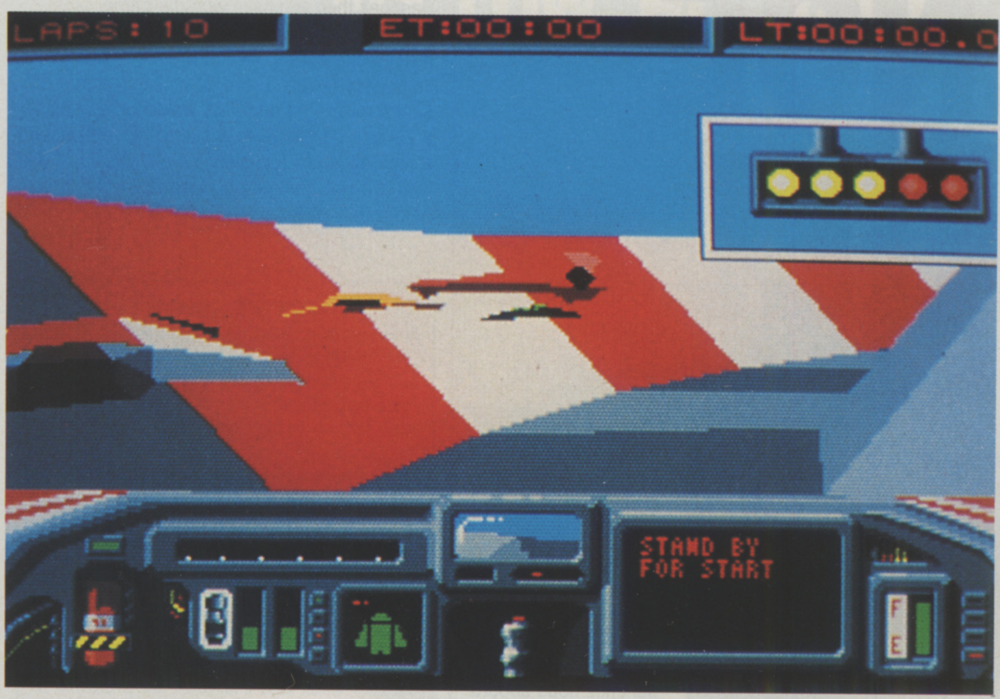
Infocom Amiga £24.99: Macintosh version reviewed issue 23: Ace rating 880

Hundreds of years ago in a time of magic and whitchery lived a young boy called Arthur, destined to pull the famous sword out of the stone stunt and become king of England, until somebody stole the stone..

Arthur is a product of one of Infocom new modern style adventures. Featuring the usual high quality of text handling and plotting which made Infocom the word in adventures, now contains lots of very detailed quality graphics.

A detailed, quality adventure for all discerning adventurers everywhere.

ACE RATING 880



POWERDROME

EA Amiga Price £24.95dk: ST version reviewed issue 15
Ace rating 925

The future sport of Powerdrome has finally come to the Amiga. It's great. Marginally faster than the ST version, it features a new centering method whereby pressing the appropriate key will level out your ship and point its nose down field. Very useful for beginners.

Powerdrome is a fast paced, pulse racer of a game, which comes with all the accolades and recommendations.

C 64

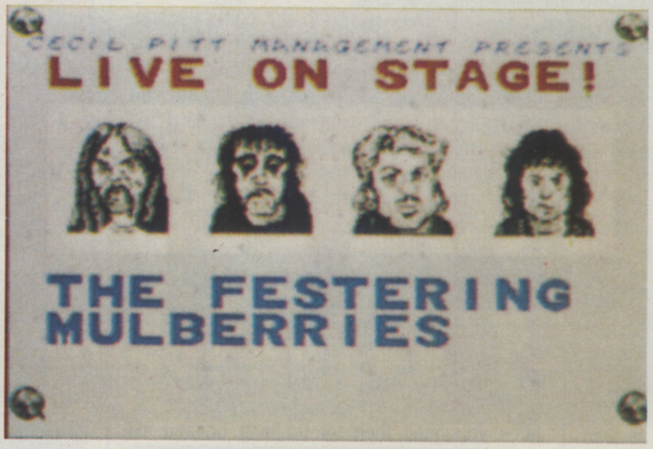
ROCK STAR

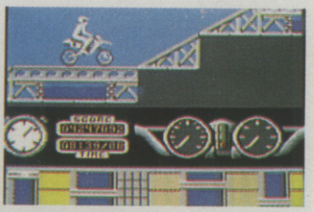
Code Masters C64 £9.95cs

Ever fancied managing one of the world's top solo artists or rock groups? Now's your chance. Share in the joy as Stiff Richard demands a thousand cases of vodka or he quits. Share the tears as Michael George perishes in a nuclear explosion while performing a publicity stunt. All this and more in Rock Star

A very funny manageri-al style game in which our only real gripe is that the game is too easy to beat. Nevertheless, a fun piece of software and a worthwhile purchase.

ACE RATING 850





SUPER SCRAMBLE SIM

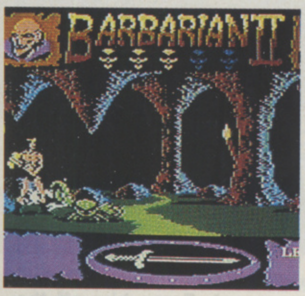
Gremlin C64 Price £9.95cs £14.95dk: Spectrum version reviewed issue 22: Ace Rating 830

A quite simple concept really, ride your bike over several courses in the fastest time possible. Pick up penalty points if you fall off or fail to clear a challenge, read the on screen advice about what caused your mishap. Get on your bike and try it again.

Unlike some other bike simulations super scramble sim contains large, well animated graphics for the main bike as well as some colourful, though utilitarian, sprites for the obstacles.

It is refreshing to see a nice, uncomplicated game which is absorbing and fun to play. Thumbs up to gremlin!

ACE RATING 845



BARBARIAN II

Palace Amiga £24.95: C64 Version reviewed

Violence, blood, guts and death are the trademarks of the Barbarian games. The Amiga version offers you more in the way of visual gore strangled death noise than the other versions. Oh, and there's a fair whack of exploration on top.

A must for Schwarzenegger fans.

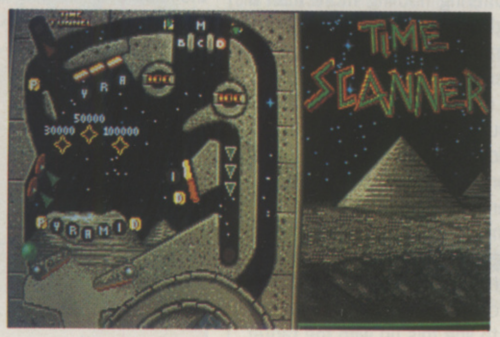
AMSTRAD

TIME SCANNER

Activision Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk Amiga version reviewed issue 21
ACE rating 769

Backed by TV advertising, Time Scanner promised to be good. Sadly it lacked that certain spark to grip you to your keyboard twenty-four hours a day. After all, pinball wasn't designed to fit onto a VDU.

This version is a fair conversion of the arcade counterpart retaining the better of the features. Good graphics and moderate sound also help Time scanner on its way.

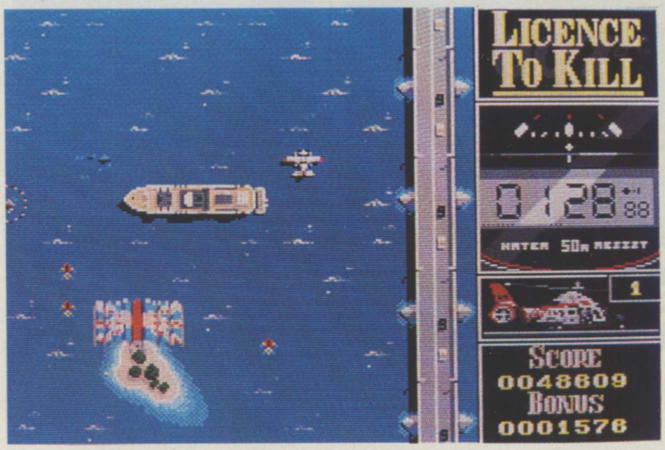


It was brave converting pinball onto an arcade format, even braver attempting a home computer version. Still it could be worth a look in.

ACE RATING 690

LICENCE TO KILL

DOMARK send in Agent 007.



Chase Sanchez in your chopper, lassoo his airplane, and drag him off into the sea. Well - this is a Bond game. Notice the divers in the water. They are waiting for you.

THE cinemas are really packing 'em in this Summer. Despite the sizzling heat a handful of blockbusters are breaking all records. Chief money spinner is *Batman*, with *Indiana Jones* and *Licence to Kill* bringing up the second and third places. Will the computer game line-up (all three games have been licensed) be any different?

Bond has the advantage of being first out of the trap – it's a multi level arcade adventure that follows closely the plot of the film. You are 007, pitting your skills against the evil drug smuggler – Sanchez.

Six arcade style events make up a race to catch Sanchez. They all centre on the ridiculously over-the-top acts of bravery of the sort we have come to expect from our gentleman adventurer. And all performed with a stiff upper lip and the kind of upper-crust style and poise that a certain bearded, whip carrying Yank can only dream about.

Unfortunately the opening screen is the worst of the six, offering nothing more than a simple dash through Sanchez's factories shooting up his gun emplacements as you pursue him in your chopper. Pretty soon Sanchez hops out of his jeep and makes a dash for it on foot.

This brings you to level two where, thankfully, things get a lot more difficult. Armed with a Beretta pistol (only 15 shots per magazine) you leg it after Sanchez – shooting it out with his henchmen amongst the oil barrels and crates. Using the gun is not easy – a targeting sight appears slightly in front of the gun and can be swung through 360 degrees with the joystick. You have to line this up with the target before taking fire and as an additional hazard the barrels are liable to explode if they absorb too much lead – constant dodging is essential.

Just when you think you've got him, Sanchez hops aboard a light aircraft and heads for the sea. At this point you dash for your chopper and take off in pursuit in what is visually the most impressive of the levels. The aim is to position the chopper over Sanchez' tail and hook up his airplane. He will parachute out at this point and 007 follows – plunging sea-wards with his Union Jack parachute easing his fall.

The sea scenes are amusing – but not particularly challenging. When Bond hits the water he finds himself in the midst of a 'drop'. White packages of cocaine bob up and down on the water as Sanchez' rifle-carrying goons skim up and down screen in high speed rubber dinghies. He also dispatches divers to stop Bond giving pursuit. Your aim is to hook up with the flying boat that is revving its engines ready to escape with the drug baron. If you make the hook you must then try to hang on and ski behind Sanchez till he reaches the mainland. This takes a bit of doing, dodging the rocks and avoiding the catamarans with yet more of the drug dealers taking pot shots at you.

The final showdown takes place on the highway. You drop from the chopper into a drug-carrying juggernaut and drive like a mad man pushing the other drug transporters off the road and bumping the jeeps. Sanchez' own jeep is armed with a powerful missile launcher that can destroy your truck with just a few direct hits. If you can succeed in bumping Sanchez then you have won the game.

Licence To Kill offers six fairly amusing arcade challenges. Two of them are disappointingly easy (levels 1 and 6) and the others present a mixed bag that that would rarely present a serious challenge to a skilled player. Despite a high standard for graphics and sound, those who are not committed Bond fans should play before they pay.

● **Eugene Lacey**

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC 128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £12.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

ST VERSION

More or less identical to the Amiga version. Smooth links beween the six levels give this arcade adventure great continuity. The whole thing hangs together well. For the first time Bond is treated well on the small screen.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 711

C64 VERSION

Sound and graphics are come close to the Amiga version - which says a lot about this conversion to the smalle Commodore.Be prepared for a more tedious multi-load though on both tape and cassette.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	7

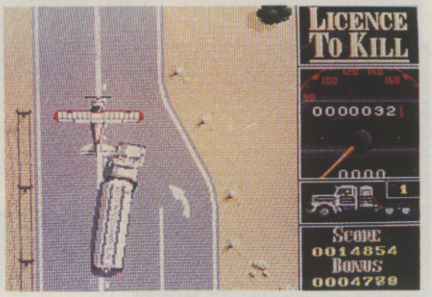
ACE RATING 730

PC VERSION

Licence To Kill is just the sort of game the PC is starved of - honest to goodness arcade fun. EGA and CGA versions are offered - and pretty good they look too.

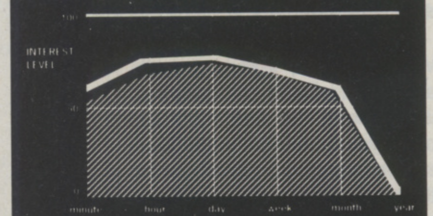
GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 730



Chasing the drug baron down the highway in a juggernaut. Force him off the road to a fiery grave.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fun while it lasts. but once you've cracked it you won't bother to come back.

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CHAFF 30
FLARE 30

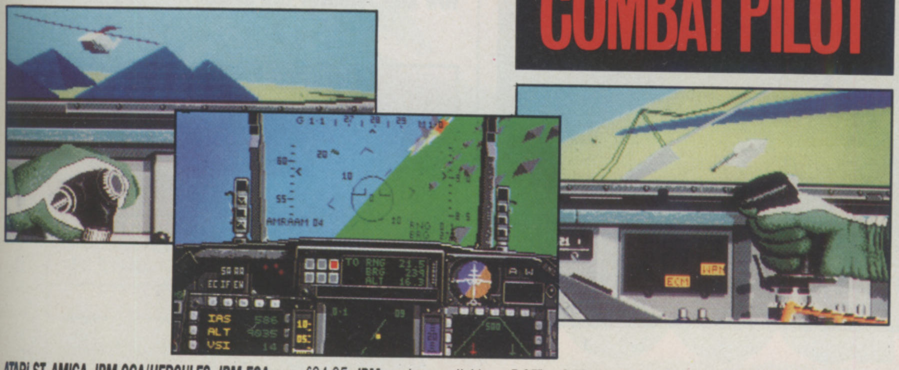
'The mix between action and realism is terrific'
– ACE rated 952 – Advanced Computer Entertainment.

'F-16 Combat Pilot wins hands down'
– 5 star game – New Computer Express.

'F-16 Combat Pilot pulls out all the stops'
– game of the month, The Games Machine.

I'm primed for action as my F-16 leaves the runway. This time my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat warning – interceptors closing fast! I quickly select dogfight mode and arm a Sidewinder. We both fire at the same time – chaff and a high-g turn out manoeuvres his missile. A loud explosion tells me he's not so lucky.

F-16 COMBAT PILOT



ATARI ST, AMIGA, IBM CGA/HERCULES, IBM EGA *r.r.p. £24.95.* **IBM** *versions available on 5.25" or 3.5" discs.*

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to switch on the ground radar and arm the laser-guided Mavericks. I fire six missiles in quick succession, Lantirn automatically locking on to each tank. With flak bursting around me I dive for cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower and request a talkdown for my night landing.

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DOMINATOR

SYSTEM 3 fail to dominate

DOES the world really need another horizontallly scrolling shoot 'em up? That may seem like an unfair question. After all, the world may not have needed another beat 'em up or arcade adventure when System 3 launched *International Karate* and *Last Ninja* - but both games went on to become the standards by which these types of game are now judged.

Mark Cale, the controversial Ferrari-driving boss of System 3, clearly believes that *Dominator* will provide a third standard in the shoot 'em up department with the claim that it will 'create a new genre in this type of home computer software' translated into three languages in the instruction manual. So does it?

In three words -'NO', 'Nein', and 'Non'.

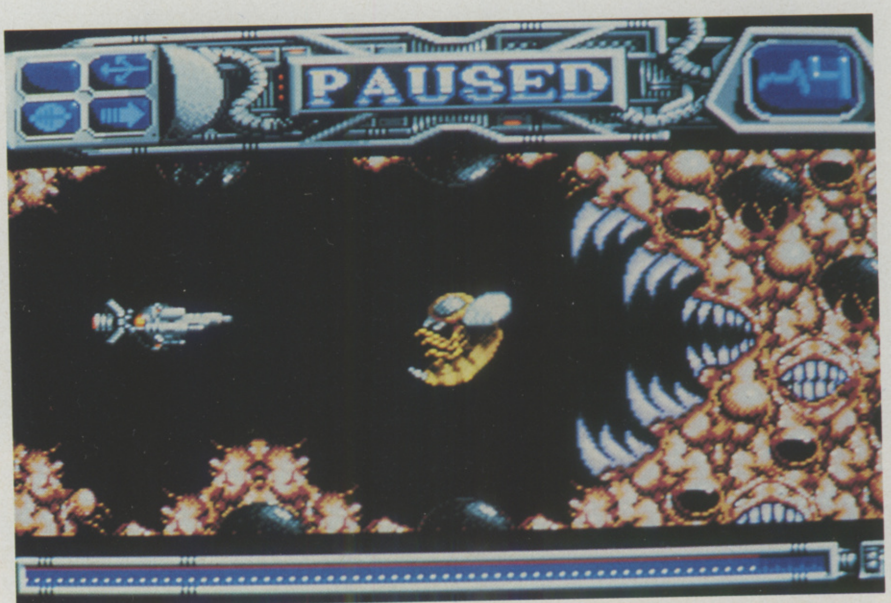
The first level is the 'Gateway' to the action - and the only vertically scrolling level. The usual assortment of power-ups are there for grabs: Rear Gun, Laser, Blaster Canon, and Autofire, but they hardly improve the playability.

Smart bombs and extra lives can also be earned by your intrepid space pilot - and these will come in handy as the game does get quite hard on the later levels.

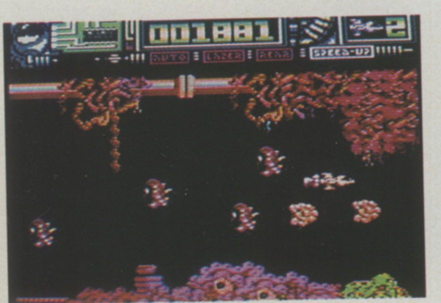
Just as you would expect there are giant end of level nasties that will absorb stacks of laser fire before finally blowing up and letting you pass. The aliens do have fairly difficult attack patterns. They zoom in quickly, necessitating a speedy trigger finger if you are to survive. They all approach from the same side though - so at least you don't have to worry about sneaky ones coming from behind, as in *R-Type* for example.

That's really all there is to *Dominator*. It is the scrolling shoot 'em up that you have seen a dozen times before whatever computer you own. Its scant distinguishing features make an uncharacteristically disappointing launch from System 3.

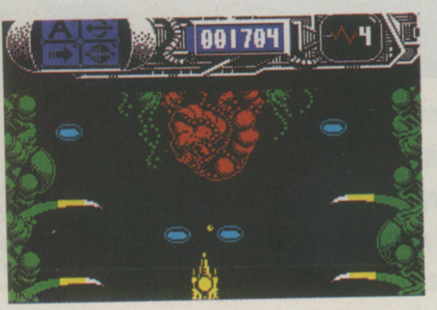
● Eugene Lacey



Amiga: Take out the yellow alien and then pump flak into the monster's gaping jaws.



C64: Colourful backdrops fail to push Dominator into the scrolling shoot-em-up hall of fame.



Spectrum: Four lives left and you're facing the giant nasty on Level 1. Dodge his fire and register ten direct hits to kill.

AMIGA VERSION

Sound FX and music are adiquate - but you get the distinct impression that the Amiga is not being stretched in either the audio or graphics departments. R-Type and Katakis do it better.

GRAPHICS 6 **IQ FACTOR** 5
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 5

ACE RATING 882

SPECTRUM VERSION

Impressive multi-coloured graphics and a nice swivel effect on the space ship. Unfortuantely marred by the same inadiquate game design as the other versions. *R-Type* stills reigns supreme on the Speccy.

GRAPHICS 7 **IQ FACTOR** 5
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 5

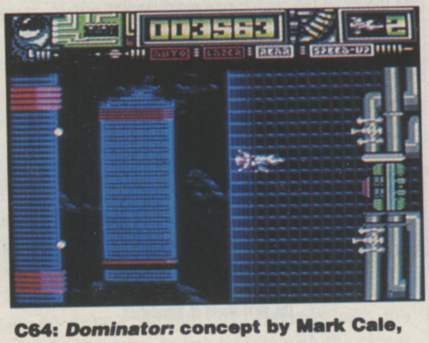
ACE RATING 882

C64 VERSION

Possibly the best of the five versions. It is just unfortunate for System 3 that the smaller Commodore is already well served for shoot 'em ups with games like *Armalyte*, *IO*, and *Delta*.

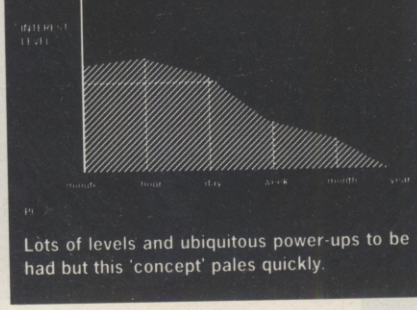
GRAPHICS 7 **IQ FACTOR** 5
AUDIO 7 **FUN FACTOR** 6

ACE RATING 882



C64: *Dominator*: concept by Mark Cale, who brought us *International Karate*.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Lots of levels and ubiquitous power-ups to be had but this 'concept' pales quickly.

RELEASE BOX

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AMS	£9.99cs £14.99dk	IMMINENT
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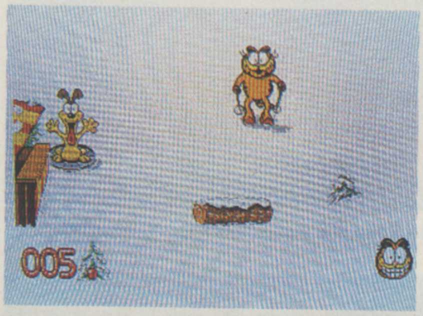
GARFIELD'S WINTER'S TALE

THE EDGE skate on ice

CHOCOLATE lasagne, and other edibles feature strongly in Garfield's latest offering - subtitled a 'Midsupper Nights Dream'.This time the famous cartoon moggy enters a series of winter sporting events as he searches for the mythical chocolate egg-laying chicken.

First event is the downhill ski run. Every few hundred yards a friendly Alpine villager will appear with a slice of yummy chocolate gateaux or a chicken leg, but this doesn't compensate for the fact that this bit is far too easy.

You then scoff as much Italian pasta as possible in the local factory. When Odie appears it's time for desert and you're off to the Chocolate Factory where you get a chance to give Odie a good kicking. Various items have to be collected on this level and food eaten to keep your energy level up. The aim is to switch all the red arrows on the chocolate pipes to the right direction so that production can begin.



There's also an ice-skating level, in which the overweight moggy has (not surprisingly) tremendous inertia, so you have to be quick to change his direction before he bumps into obstacles. The aim in the lake screen is to catch a chicken that has escaped from the factory and is hiding somewhere in the icey maze.

Each level can be played separately or you can complete them in the correct sequence and get into the Swiss village where the Easter egg laying chicken awaits you.

The best thing about the game is the animation and graphical representation of Garfield. He looks great, but unfortunately the games lack any imagination whatsoever. All four episodes are far too simplistic. Seriously lacking in gameplay and with a very low addiction factor this turns out to be more of a Garfield nightmare than a dream.

● Eugene Lacey

ST VERSION

Sound FX are minimal - a real weakness in a skiing game as you really need to hear the sound of the blades sliding across the snow. A nauseating tune adds little to the game and will soon have you reaching for your volume control. Graphics and animation are impressive - though the whole thing is let down by lack of game play.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	3
AUDIO	3	**FUN FACTOR**	4

ACE RATING 294

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
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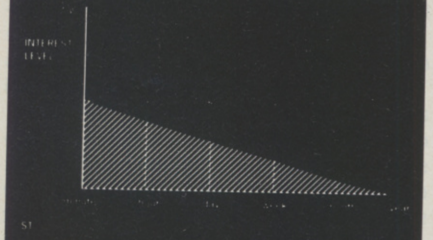
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Garfield's alpine adventure – a down-hill slope all the way...

WATCH YOUR SCREEN – SEPTEMBER
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OMNI-PLAY
BASKETBALL

SPORT-TIME launch a whole new ball game

BASKETBALL is the first in a series of games that looks set to revolutionise the entire computer sports scene. When you buy *Omni-Play Basketball*, you don't get a basketball game as you might expect. You actually purchase a basketball 'framework' and two modules to add to the frame. The first lets you play or coach in the SBA league, and the second is an 'end-play' module, that basically lets you play with end views taken from the halfway line, rather than the more traditional side-on view. More modules are definitely planned, which means rather than buy a game, you've bought a system which sooner or later will come up with a version of the game that's perfect for you. Hence the extravagant packaging blurb which claims you'll never have to buy another basketball game again.

The game itself is simple five-on-five basketball. You can choose to play, coach or both. Coaching is very simple. At time during the game, a series of options will appear, about the various aspects of your team's play (Attacking, defending etc) and all you have to do is answer one of the options given. At the end of the options, you are given the chance to change your team around manually or, an option we were happy to see at last, automatically.

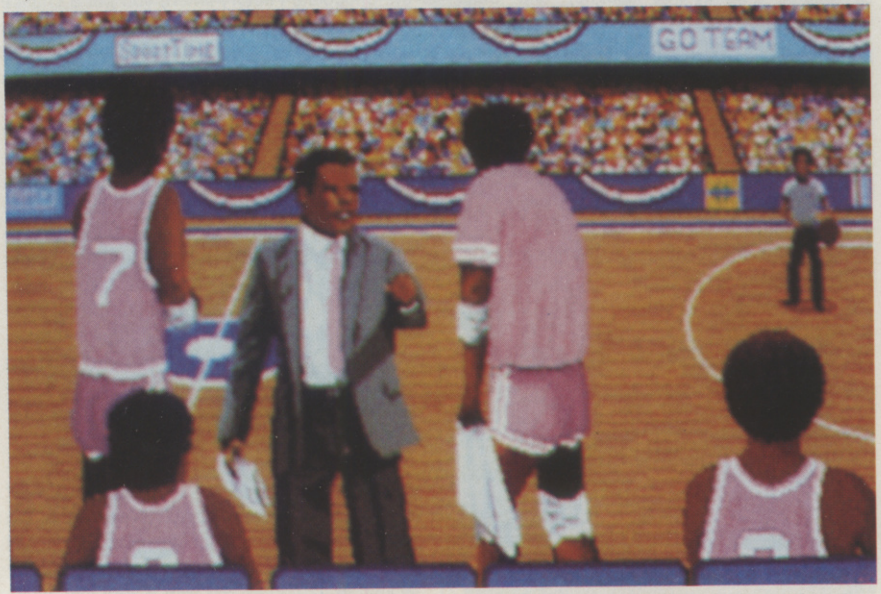
Choose Auto and the computer will ask you which of four points is important to your new line up, and will rearrange your team with this new strength.

You have five players to control, and you always control the one nearest the ball. Controls are very simple, yet effective. Usual eight way controls make you run in that direction – don't warry about dribbling as possession control is automatic. Tap the fire button while holding the joystick in any of the four diagonals, and you will pass to the player roughly in that direction. Hold down the fire button, and your player will take a shot which is where the brilliant graphics come in.

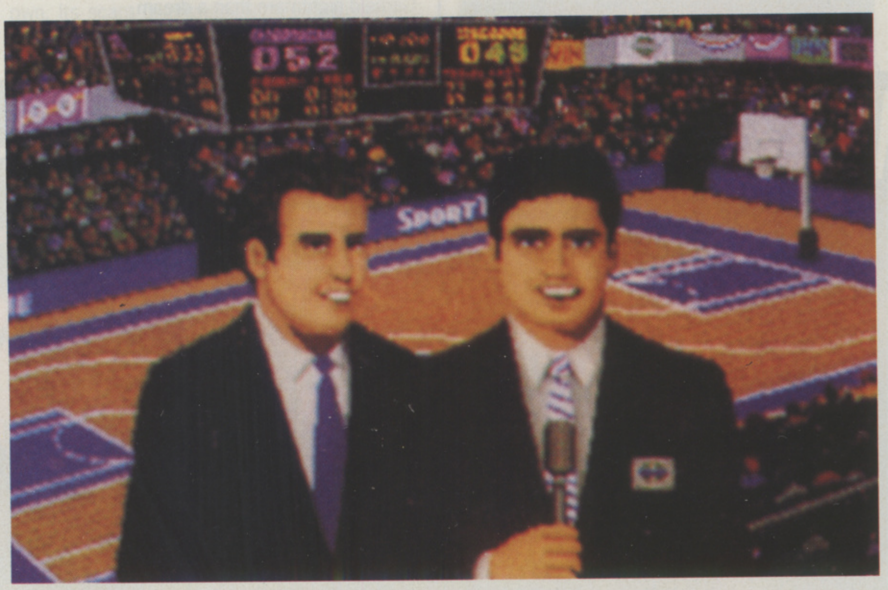
The way the players run and pass is realistic enough, but what is amazing is the amount of different ways they score, depending on where they were when they took the shot. Some leap up and slam dunk it, others drop it in as they fly past, some just take a long shot and hope, but it's all done very smoothly and very convincingly. These graphics perfectly complement all the other great pics in the game – the stills that come up between quarters, for example. There is a brilliant picture of the pitch taken from behind the stands that comes up at half time.

Even those who are not afficionadoes of the sport should get a few kicks (or passes) out of this game. True basketball fans will really get into it however and thanks to the modules, I can't see it getting boring for a while yet.

● Tony Dillon

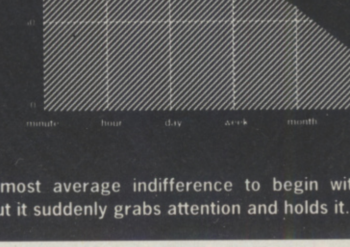


Player control is pretty basic, but this helps to keep the pace flowing on the pitch.



Great graphics throughout the game help to maintain your interest, but the gameplay's good enough to save Omni-Play Basketball from being just a pretty face.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Almost average indifference to begin with, but it suddenly grabs attention and holds it.

AMIGA VERSION

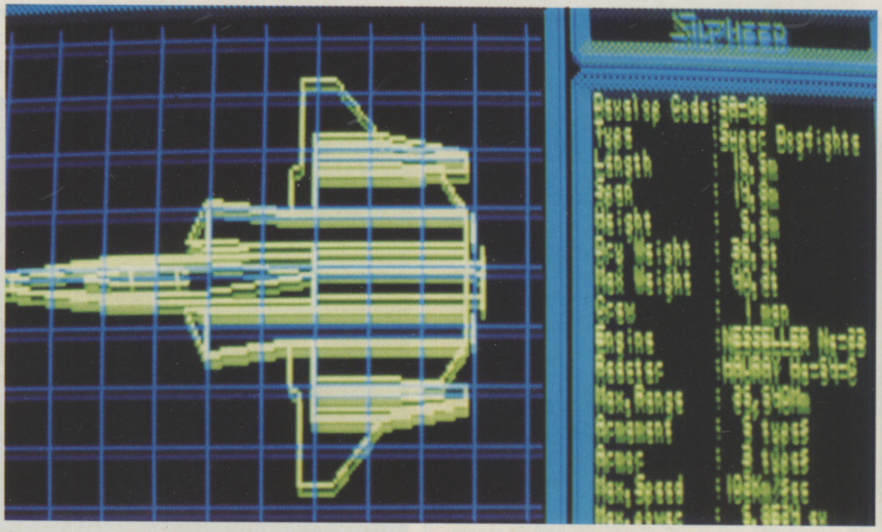
Slightly blocky, but well animated graphics make the game a visual treat, adn the sheer versatility of the package adds more than a bit of lasting power. A basketballer's dream.

GRAPHICS 8 **IQ FACTOR** 6
AUDIO 6 **FUN FACTOR** 7

ACE RATING 852

RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW

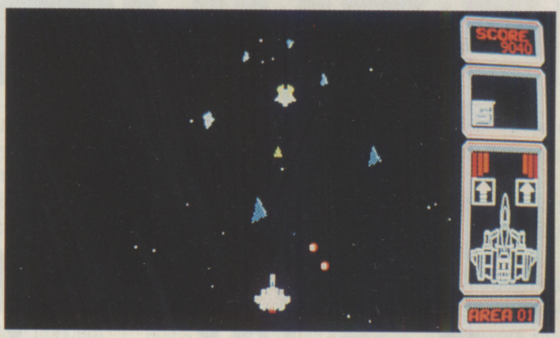


The pre-flight briefing's graphics get you in the mood for battle.

SILPHEED

SIERRA's Japanese shoot'em-up is of epic proportions.

SLEEK sylph-like and streamlined your ship soars through the star-streaked emptiness of space and... enough of the poetry. You kill things! However many times you've shot up half the universe, there's always something totally addictive about a well-balanced blaster, even if it's just a descendant of Space Invaders. This Japanese variation on the theme comes with the works, from choice of weapons between stages to a wide variety of enemy ships and scenery. It's all so big you're reccomended to run it from a hard disk!



In space nobody can hear you scream above the noise of blasters!

Having installed it for your PC's display, sound capabilities and choice of keyboard or joystick - highly recommended for reasons of speed and to take the strain off your keyboard - you're faced with an 'enemy identification' anti-piracy test. It's worth putting up with this as it means the disks are copyable.

Next, prepare for a lengthy briefing session, complete with spectacular animated graphics and scrolling text. After the Star Wars-style pep-talk, it's into the cockpit and a message from a giant animated head. Quite what he says is beyond my PC's internal speaker - it may well be a selection of jolly japes from a Japanese joke book for all I can tell. Still it looks good.

Then it's action all the way with scarcely time to breathe as waves upon waves of alien ships, each with their distinctive flight patterns and characteristics, swoop in from the distance or attack from behind. You can move left and right and advance, in perspective, about half-way into the screen.. Like I said, a descendant of those old green bastards but Invaders was never this challenging or varied.

For starters, some of the nasties are best avoided, so be prepared to dodge. Then there are the Golans which provide you with extra features for your ship, rather like an inter-planetary Texaco station. Shoot them and a token appears which drifts from side to side as it approaches. Catching them is easy in theory but some are sure to slip through when you're trying to get out of the way of a wave of attackers at the same time!

The first of these tokens appears just before the initial attack – make sure you get it because without the 'W' Weapon power-up you're a goner. Later you'll get a chance to increase the Ship Speed and set your Laser and Beam cannons to Auto-fire. Best of all though are Destroy, a sort of smart bomb, Barrier which stops enemy projectiles reaching you and Invincible. Also look out for Repair.

Each level ends with something spectacularly nasty. In the first it's rings of circling mines which weave around the screen, calling for fast reactions. Level two is worse - a large craft which comes in from behind you and dodges and dives, firing missiles all the time. But Silpheed passes my playability test; almost every game you get a little further. __ A word also about the sound effects. It's easy to overlook the importance of all the zaps and explosions but I'm convinced that they keep the adrenalin pumping. Even on a PC, Silpheed is excellent. There's also a suitably epic opening theme plus a nice piece of imitation Philip Glass during the battles. __ There are 21 levels and I confess, I've only scratched the surface. Following the space action comes a flight above the planet where you won't find any Power-Up items. After that there's a Fortress where you have to navigate between walls and fences. And finally there are Asteroid Belts where you have to dodge Guided Satellite Amour as well as natural obstacles.

In between stages there's the chance to alter you weapon configuration. Forward Beams are the basic, destructive shots, but for some levels you may do better with Phalanx Beams which also give you side shots; V-Beams which shoot diagonally or more destructive but less accurate Laser Cannons. Auto-Aiming is useful in some situations but Asteroid Belts are too crowded for it.

There are also animated sections between several major levels. No wonder *Silpheed* comes on four 5.25" disks or two 3.5". This truly is an epic shoot 'em up which lives up to its length. Thankfully the programmers have also included an option which allows you to load the last highest level or proceed to the one you were in. Very thoughtful. Put simply, *Silpheed* is something special!

● John Minson

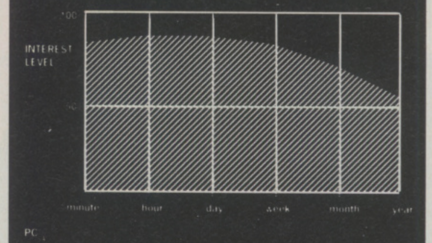
PC VERSION

You don't get many good shoot-em-ups on the PC. This is definitely one of the better offerings at present which makes as good a use of the machine as we could expect.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	7
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	9

ACE RATING 905

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Spectacularly fast, blasting action with enough variety to keep you involved longer than the average shoot 'em up.

RELEASE BOX

IBM PC	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£29.99dk	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	IMMINENT

SKWEEK

Squeaky-clean entertainment from US GOLD.

ONCE upon a time, somewhere far out in the deepest reaches of space, on a planet in the most obscure corner of the galaxy, there lived a race of cuter little furry creatures, collectively known as Skweez. They worked and lived in peaceful harmony until, one fateful day, the nasty Schnoreuls attacked their home and contaminated their candy-coloured land with poisonous blue Skweeticide.

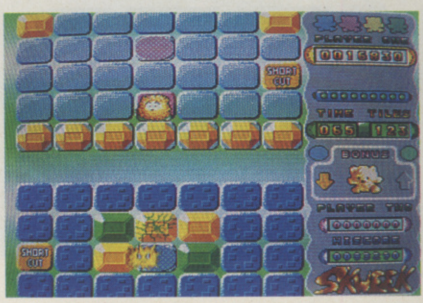
Each of the 99 continents of Skweezland consist of a series of different title arrangements. To turn the blue areas pink, all Skweek has to do is walk over the infected titles within the time limit. All this would be easy, not to say tedious, if it weren't for the arrangement of the bricks. Some drag you only in certain directions; some, made of ice, cause Skweek to slip; others are cracked and disintegrate when stepped upon, while others still explode on contact taking the surrounding titles with them.

The Schnoreuls aren't going to give up without a fight, either. Virus carriers slowly reinfect healthy areas and contact with bacteria, ghosts and other enemies is fatal. Skweek is equipped with a gun but as the monster generators are indestructible, it's only useful temporarily.

Every now and again, a bonus item appears briefly before dematerialising again. Goodies include points, warps to the next level, extra time, invincibility, bonus lives, anti-slip trainers and improved fire power. Gift boxes are an unknown quantity - you might get anything from extra points to reversed controls. Extra cuteness factor is provided by four different coloured teddy-bears. Collect them all and you get five more lives plus a handy warp to the next level.

If you're after breathtaking 3D graphics and the kind of extraordinarily complex gameplay you can only achieve on 16bit , forget it. Like Pacmania, Skweek definitely relies on cuteness and addictive gameplay for success. Anyone who's enjoyed games like Bombuzal, Pacman and OOps, all of which Skweek resembles, will know the feeling ; it doesn't look or sound like anything special but once you start playing you just can't stop.

● Kati Hamza



Watch out for the holes in the floor - fall down one of these and you'll really be squealing.

ST VERSION

Slick presentation and attractive graphics enhance the addictive gameplay. Featureless music and sound effects are the only disappointment.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 841

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
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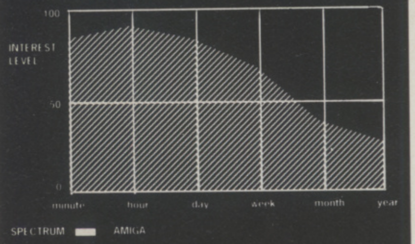
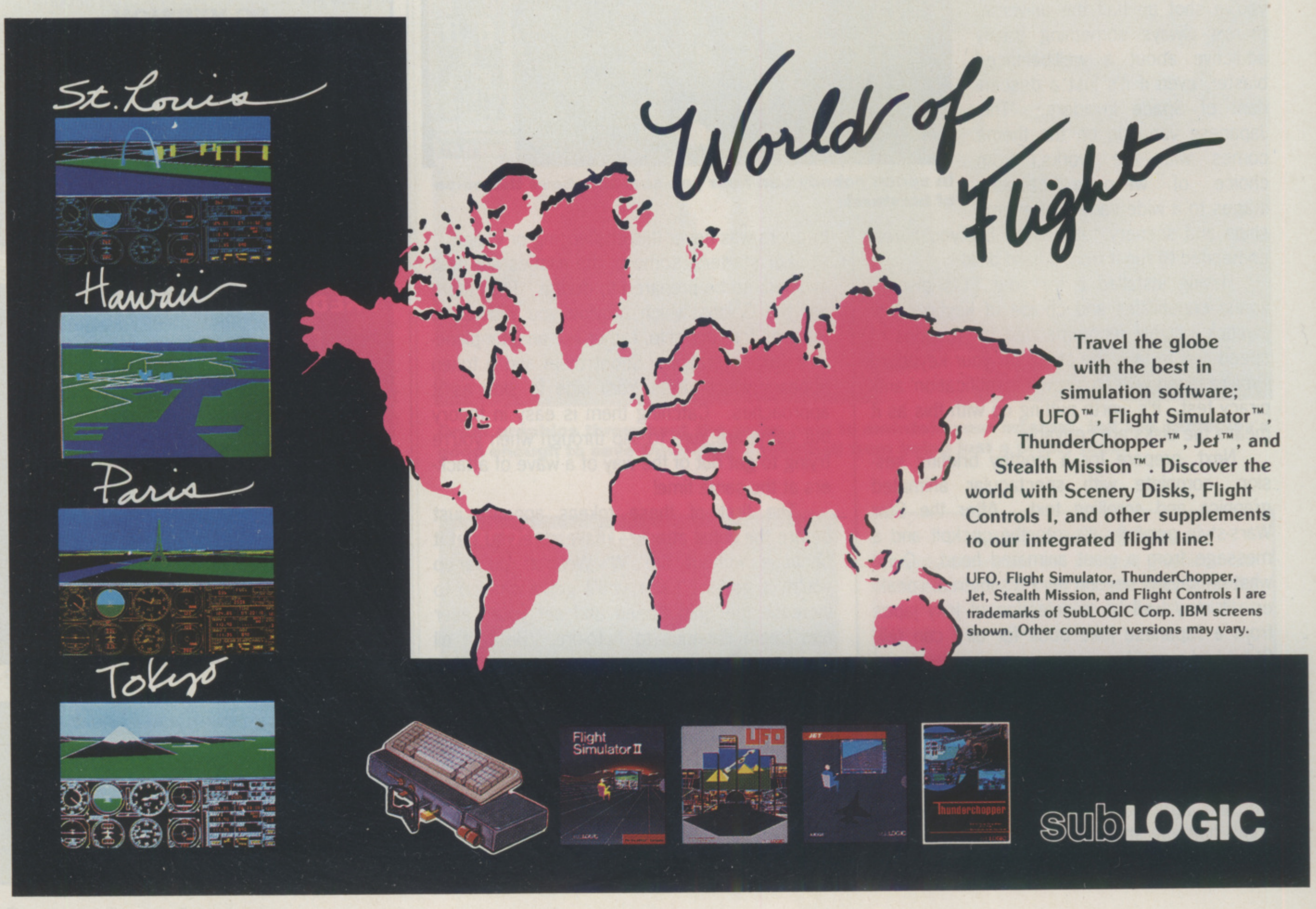
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great fun at first, but even the most addictive games pall in the end...



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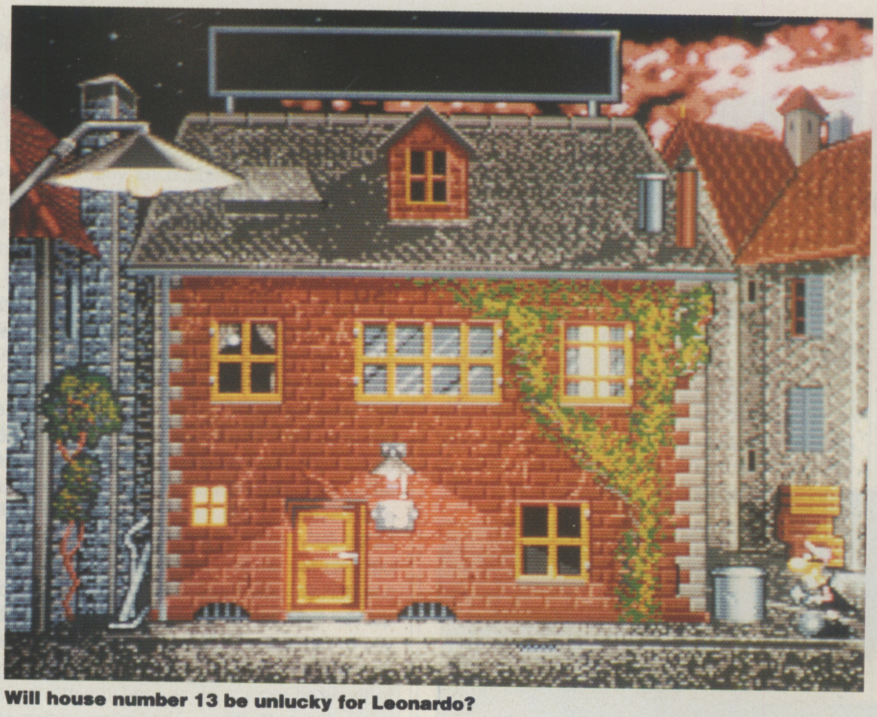


Will house number 13 be unlucky for Leonardo?

LEONARDO

STARBYTE computerise a golden oldie.

LEONARDO is a computer re-work of the classic sliding tile game. You can get these pocket sized plastic puzzles free in Christmas crackers, or buy them for about 50p in Woolworths. The basic aim is to keep sliding the tiles around until you get them in the correct order – thus forming a picture or, more simply, a series of numbers.

The computer takes this fine game concept and pushes it a good deal further. Much further even than Domark did a couple of years ago with the first computer 'tile 'em up' - Split Personalities. In that game you were restricted to tile by tile movements with a cursor, within the borders of the grid.

Leonardo improves on this. It is played on a 4x4 screen scrolling board and permits your character to run around it – pushing certain objects into position and grabbing other bonus items.

You are Leonardo the thief – seen approaching a posh house in the graphically impressive title sequence.

Leonardo's aim is simple. To get through as many levels as possible nicking as many valuables as he can lay his sticky little fingers on. To do this he needs to line up three items all in a line by pushing them around the board. He starts with three diamond encrusted stars, moves on to necklaces, and then on to computers. There are dozens more levels – but ACE is not in the business of telling you the score before you see the match so the first three are going to have to suffice.

Lots of items are dotted around the board to add extra interest. There are wads of money for extra points, a Paralysing Rock that freezes the ghost and Guard who are in hot pursuit of Leonardo , Anti-Guard Dynamite Sticks to send him scurrying back to his hut, Keys to bonus levels, and pearls for still more points in the bonus level. The reward for all this puzzling is a glimpse of one of Leonardo's private collecttion of prints. Worth playing for if they are anything like the execllent title sequence.

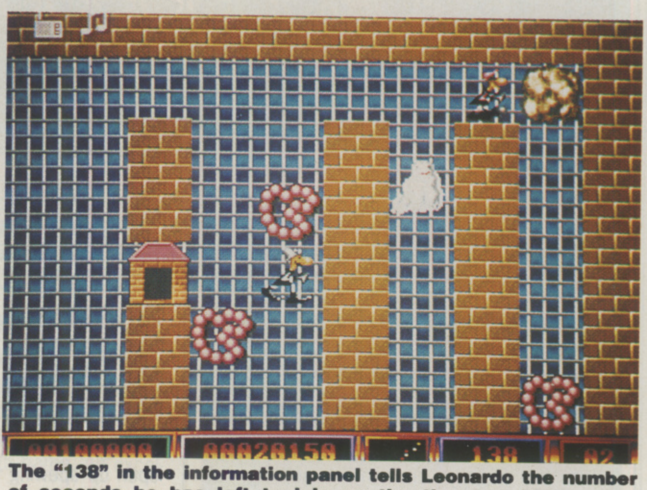
AMIGA VERSION

Garlands of roses to Starbyte for filling the whole screen with their game. So many games appear in a tiny narrow strip of the screen. Don't you just hate this? The whole Amiga presentation of Leonardo is carried out to an extremely high stan-

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	6

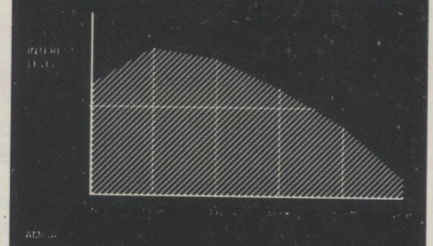
RELEASE BOX

AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT



The "138" in the information panel tells Leonardo the number of seconds he has left to join up the three necklaces and progress to the next level.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

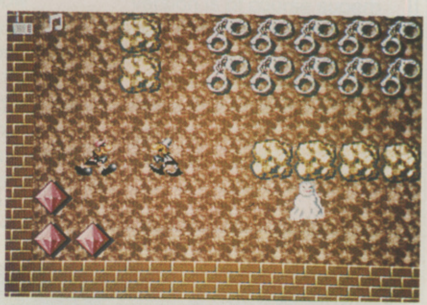


Very strong on addiction - but once completed it is as dead as a ZX-81.

The best game play device of all is the Radar Scanner. It shows you the position of Leonardo, the three items to be joined together, and the Ghost and Guard. This makes the game much more than a mad *PacMan*-style dash around a maze- enabling you to play a cat and mouse game game with the guard and the ghost - studying their position and working out your strategy to join the three items together. And believe me - you will need a strategy, as these puzzles take a bit of solving. There is very little room for error. Push a valuable into a corner and you are finished. There is no way you can get behind it to push it back to where it is supposed to be.

An entertaining arcade game with a most welcome thinking element. Nowhere near a Tetris-league placing - but in the same division.

● Eugene Lacey



The top-hatted Guard is after Leonardo - whilst the ghost hovers ominously underneath the boulders.

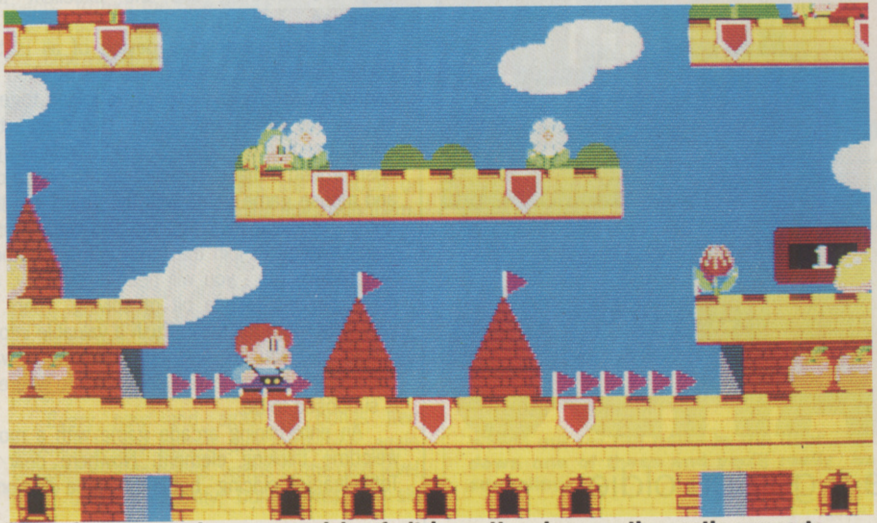
RAINBOW ISLANDS

FIREBIRD find Graftgold at the end of the rainbow.

BUBBLE Bobble is arguably the king of all cute platform games. Starring Bub and Bob it wowed gamers on all formats when launched in '87 and has appeared since on several compilations. The coin-op sequel - *Rainbow Islands* appeared in the arcades in March this year and now Firebird launch the home versions.

Bub and Bob were given the power of the Magic Rainbow by their parents in *Bubble Bobble*. Now grown up, they return to the land of their birth, intent on using the rainbow to find treasure and deal with their arch enemy - the giant dragon at the end of the last level.

Before the final showdown Bub and Bob have to complete all seven islands - each one divided into four levels. All of the gems must be gathered from each level- picking them up after 'rainbowing' the nasties.


Lots of energy and power-up-giving fruit is scattered across the castle ramparts.

The method of exploring the platforms is by creating rainbows which Bub and Bob can walk on. It is also possible to stand atop rainbows and to jump onto them.

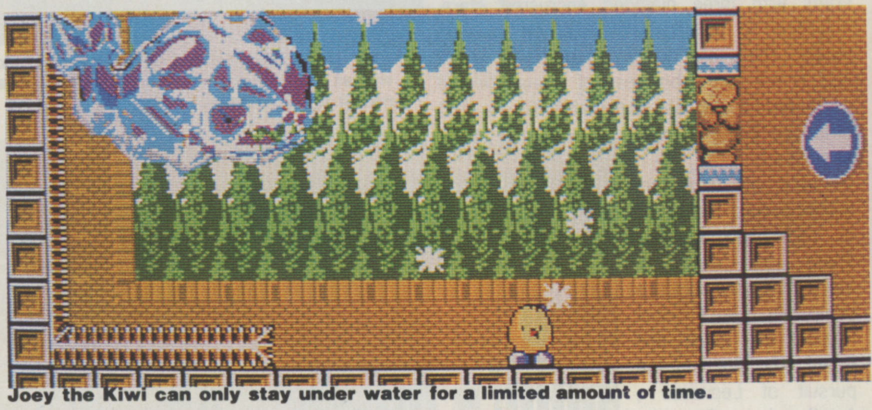
Mastering the use of the rainbows is essential right at the beginning of the game - but once you have cracked it it becomes second nature and you can get on with the business of zapping nasties, collecting the treasure and destroying the end level guardians. One particularly neat move is to sweep a rainbow out over the terrain - prospecting for treasure.

Certain power-ups come in handy in your quest - like the the magic shoes which enable you to run faster. Yellow and red potion jars are also worth picking up. The red ones enable you to throw an extra rainbow - and you may collect up to three of these. The yellow potion jars increase the speed of casting rainbows.

As well as enabling you to get around the rainbows are also used for zapping your foes - the bees, bats and mechanical fish and other nasties that inhabit the levels of Rainbow Islands. There are various ways of doing this - you may link three rainbows together and then explode them in a chain reaction. You can also barge into rainbows sending them crashing down on top of one of the nasties - or simply cast a rainbow to land on top of the enemy.

NEW ZEALAND

OCEAN'S Kiwi fun in glorious 'Upsidedownovision'.


Joey the Kiwi can only stay under water for a limited amount of time.

CUTENESS and platform capers are back with a bang. Forget military flight sims with chunky manuals. 'Pick up and play' platform romps are what the well dressed computer is promenading in this Summer.

In the 'cutesy' department nothing outcute's' The New Zealand Story. Wally Walrus has bagged a sack full of Joey Kiwi's friends from New Zealand zoo.He stuffs the chicklets into a sack and makes off with them - intent on a kiwi blow-out for supper.You are Joey the Kiwi and it is down to you to rescue your chums in this conversion of the popular Taito coin-op.

The platforms are crammed with nasties waiting to thwart Joey's progress. Windows open up spewing forth snails, fire sprites, and spear-wielding Maori warriors.

Joey is armed with a bow and arrow which he needs to wield very quickly if he is to stay

ST VERSION

Fast and smooth. Slightly let down by the sound FX and music. There is nothing particularly complicated about the NZ Story's sound - the ST ought to have been up to it. Still rates as a superb conversion despite this gripe.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 875

AMIGA VERSION

The sound chips have realy been put to good use in NZ Story. All of the bleeps and moronic tunes from the arcade original are here. Nothing has been left out. Four directonal scrolling is handled very smoothly and - most impressively of all - the Amiga manages to match the coin-op for speed. Pretty nippy it is too.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 875

Just as effective.

Each of the seven levels is divided into four sections and you will meet the traditional giant end-of-level nasty at the end of each level. These tend to be giant versions of some of the nasties already encountered: a giant spider at the end of level one, a helicopter on level two and a bat-spewing Dracula at the end of level three. Each level is progressively more difficult - but it is not just the nasties that have to be taken into consideration. There is a time factor to worry about as well. Hang around for too long on any one island and the land will start to sink, losing you a life.

One nice touch in the home conversion of RI is the credit system. You can select up to five credits at the beginning of each game (each one worth three lives) providing that extra feel of a coin-op.

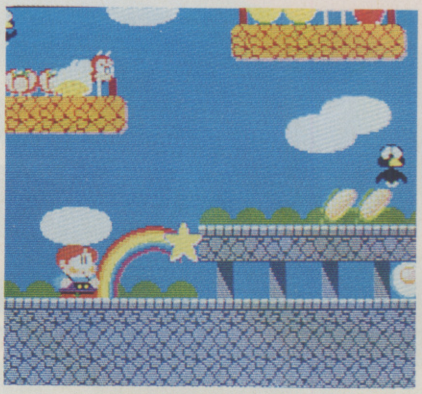
The rainbow device is a simple but engaging hook to game play. Just as gamers got hooked on blowing bubbles to zap the enemies in *Bubble Bobble* - they will find rainbow casting equally addictive in this sequel.

ST VERSION

Graftgold have squeezed every last ounce out of the ST to give a near coin-op perfect conversion of Rainbow Islands. Sounds good and scrolls smoothly. The graphical effect of the rainbow arcing across the screen is a delight. Two disks explain the slightly hefty price tag.

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	7
AUDIO	9	**FUN FACTOR**	9

ACE RATING 934



Rainbow Islands - the sequel to Bubble Bobble and one of the best coin-op conversions of '89 so far.

RELEASE BOX

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AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OCTOBER

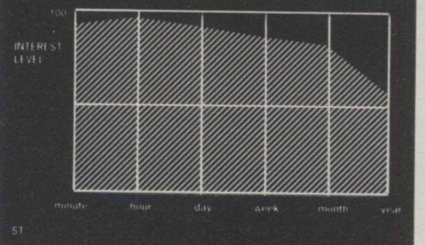
The only variation with the original coin-op is the omission of the three secret islands and the Prince of Darkness. Memory limitations prevented Graftgold from including these in the home versions- though they have managed to include both of the possible animated end-game sequences.

Steve Turner, Andy Braybrook and company can congratulate them selves on this fine conversion. It is nearly identical to the coin-op in almost every department, with smooth animation and colourful graphics plus jolly coin-op sound FX and tunes to support it.

Totally unputdownable.

● Eugene Lacey

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Lasting appeal guaranteed. you'll be playing it when you're old and grey.

WHAT A CHOICE!

It's rare that two relatively similar arcade games from the same company should be converted for play at home at the same time. Rarer still that both games should be converted to such a high standard. This presents a dilemma for the punter.- Which of these two excellent games to go for?

The obvious choice is to go for both! However, if you're really stretched, we have given *Rainbow Islands* marginally higher marks for the following reasons. We believe the game concept and design of the game play in *Rainbow Islands* is superior to *New Zealand Story*.The credit for this belongs to Taito (the original desigers of both games).The Graftgold conversion is of course superb , but it is in the game play department that *Rainbow Islands* really scores and it is this that may make the game as much of a classic as *Bubble Bobble*.

STORY

alive long enough to explore the scrolling levels of the zoo and release the birds that are held in the cages you find there. When Joey hits a target it will turn into a piece of fruit which he collects by walking into it. These fruits equip Joey with bombs (useful for lobbing at nasties on lower platforms), a shield, extra lives, and a laser gun.

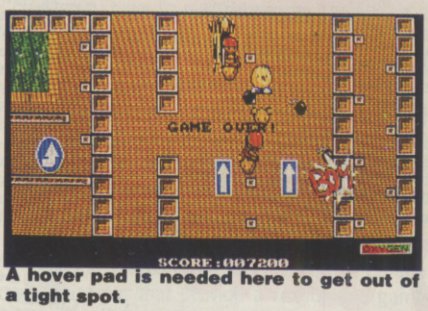
Kiwis can not fly in real life so NZ story introduces hover pads which Joey can collect to explore the platforms. There are also hot air balloons to be had on certain levels.

The graphics in NZ story are excellent – particularly the under water sequences where Joey dons his wet suit and goggles. The aquatic sequences are difficult as Joey can only swim under water for a limited amount of time - and he cannot use his trusty bow and arrow under water. He can however take out certain nasties by surfacing and spitting a jet of water at them.

NZ story is really a hybrid. An excellent mixture of shoot 'em up and platform leaping. The end-level nasties are worthy of the meanest of shoot 'em ups - like the giant whale at the end of Level one. This can only be beaten by shooting it in the head until it swallows you.

Taito are past masters at this kind of cute platform game. Bubble Bobble was the classic and NZ Story continues the fine tradition. The game play is exciting and the visuals provide reward for persvering until all levels have been explored, end-level nasties bested, and Kiwis rescued. An excellent conversion. Don't be fooled by the pretty pretty look of the graphics in NZ story. This is one tough game. An excellent conversion.

● Eugene Lacey



A hover pad is needed here to get out of a tight spot.

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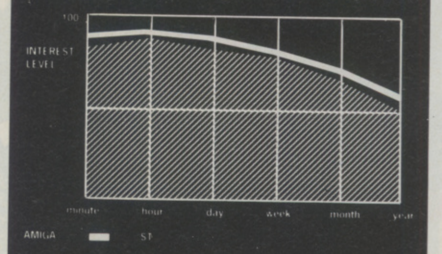
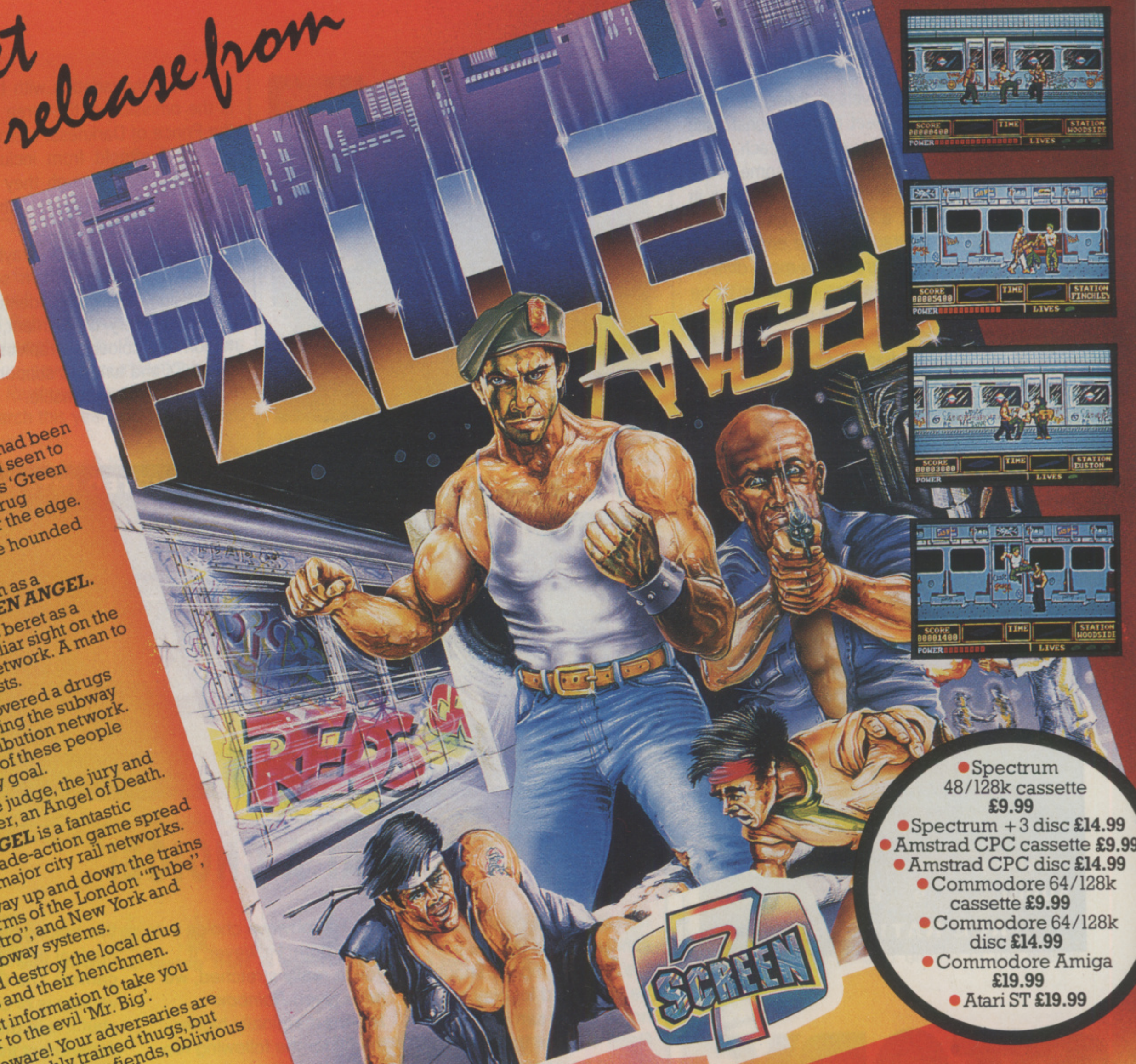
SPEC	£8.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Fast and furious platform game with a good dose of shoot 'em up thrown in for good measure. It will take you months to beat NZ Story.

The next superb release from



He had been the best!
The trains on his patrol had been free from crime. He had seen to that. But the death of his 'Green Beret' brother from a drug overdose sent him over the edge.

Seeking vengeance he hounded drug dealers.

He became well known as a renegade—the ***FALLEN ANGEL.***

Wearing his brother's beret as a tribute, he was a familiar sight on the New York subway network. A man to be avoided at all costs.

By chance he uncovered a drugs ring which was using the subway systems as a distribution network. The destruction of these people became his only goal.

He became the judge, the jury and the executioner, an Angel of Death.

FALLEN ANGEL is a fantastic scrolling arcade-action game spread across four major city rail networks.

Beat your way up and down the trains and platforms of the London "Tube", Paris "Metro", and New York and Berlin Subway systems.

Find and destroy the local drug dealers and their henchmen.

Collect information to take you closer to the evil 'Mr. Big'.

But beware! Your adversaries are not just highly trained thugs, but often crazed drug fiends, oblivious to pain.

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Also available from Screen 7

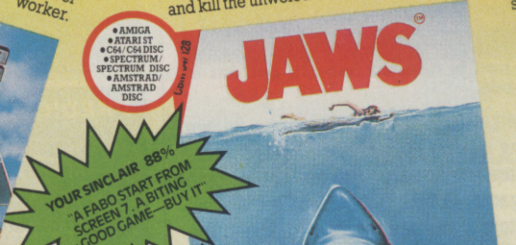
This is no time to feel dizzy. As you balance precariously on a narrow steel girder, hundreds of feet above the hard concrete below, a head for heights is a must. There's a skyscraper to be built, and the Spitters, Crawlers and metal-munching Gremlins are in hot pursuit. You step over the slippery remains of your workmates' lunch, hurl your spanner at a menacing shadow, and curse the day you became a high steel worker.

AMSTRAD
SCREEN 7

- AMIGA
- ATARI ST
- SPECTRUM/ SPECTRUM DISC
- AMSTRAD/ AMSTRAD DISC

A great white shark is terrorising the beaches of Amity Island. A grim discovery confirms the worst—he's out there and he's hungry.
In desperation, Mayor Vaughn turns to you, Police Chief Brody. With your two colleagues, Hooper, the shark expert, and Quint, the manic shark hunter, you set off to retrieve the lethal weapons from the sea bed and kill the unwelcome intruder.

- AMIGA
- ATARI ST
- C64/ C64 DISC
- SPECTRUM/ SPECTRUM DISC
- AMSTRAD/ AMSTRAD DISC


JAWS
SCREEN 7
YOUR SINCLAIR 88%
"A FABO START FROM SCREEN 7. A BITING GOOD GAME—BUY IT"
CRASH 80%
GREAT START FOR SCREEN 7
"GRAPHICS OF EXCELLENT QUALITY" "GOOD BLASTING FUN"

Marauder. Soldier of Fortune. Hit man. His business was death -other people's of course —and his currency was gold . . . If there was a problem—any problem—someone else's problem STEIGAR would make it his problem—at a price. . . . No island fortress was secure. No Embassy was safe. If the gold was right —the job got done . . .

Then came capture. The interrogation . . . *"Too useful to eradicate"* the CIA said. Drafted into the US Navy, STEIGAR is trained to be a hit-and-run helicopter pilot. Only the Senior Command know that STEIGAR is no ordinary recruit.

STEIGAR
CBM 64/128
SCREEN 7

- AMIGA
- ATARI ST
- C64/ C64 DISC
- SPECTRUM/ SPECTRUM DISC
- AMSTRAD/ AMSTRAD DISC

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INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

US GOLD crack the whip.

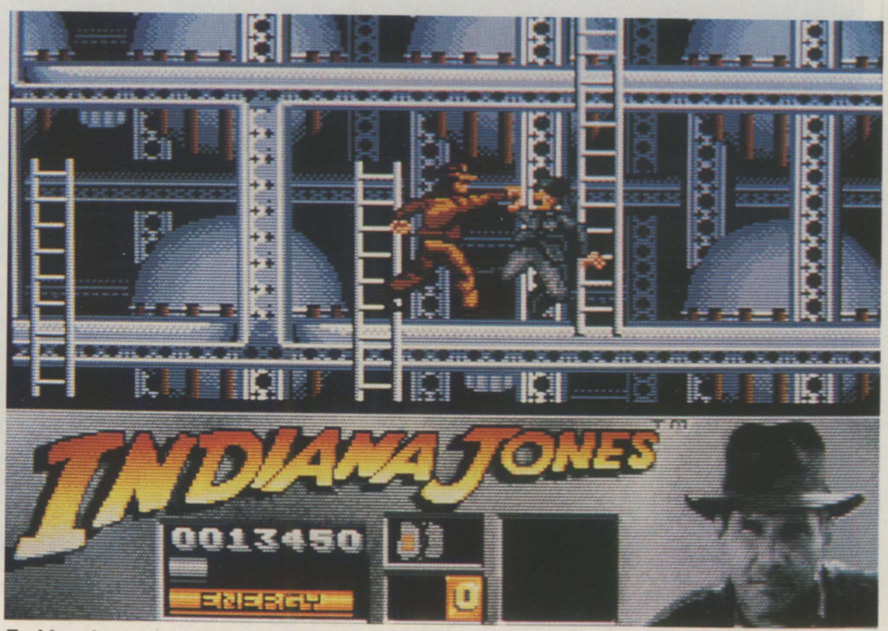
INDY has seen a few computer games in his time. It all started in 1983 with the quest for the Arc of the Covenant in the Atari VCS Raiders game. In 1985 US Gold produced their first Indy game. Coded for them by Mindscape in America, *Indiana Jones - In The Lost Kingdom* didn't exactly set the world alight with its collection of esoteric puzzles. They fared much better two years later with *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* - producing home versions of the Atari Indy coin-op. Now US Gold enter the fray once again with titles based on the latest blockbuster - Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.

Two games will be launched on the back of the film. The 'Action Game' is reviewed here (a Graphic Adventure will follow) coded by Teartex - the development house responsible for other U S Gold titles such as *Street Fighter, Brave Star*, and *Human Killing Machine*.

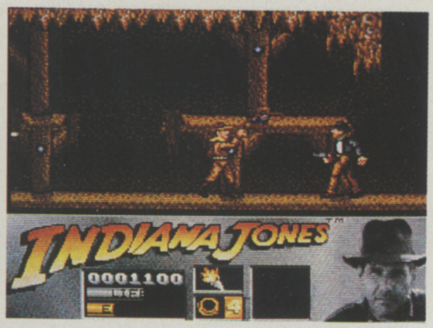
Last Crusade is U S Gold's flashiest launch ever. No expense was spared to give Indy a big push as the games giant hope for 'third time lucky' for their latest IJ game. Press screenings of the film were organised for games mag journalists and a lavish party thrown at Stringfellows with US Gold staff dressed up as characters from the film.

So does the game live up to all this razzamatazz? 'Sort of' is the main impression. The overall aim is to snatch the Holy Grail from Adolf Hitler who is intent on using its powers to finally install himself as world dictator.

You begin your quest in the cave complex. A platform type game where you have to leap from rope to rope (would have added a touch of realism if they swung), jump from platform to platform and dodge or whip the Nazis that are taking pot shots at you with their pistols. Your aim here is to find the Cross of of Coronado - your key to the next level. Get this and you find your self aboard a a lorry accelerating away from Adolf's storm troopers who appear from all directions.



End level sequence. Can Indy escape on the giant German Zeppelin.



Indy searches for the Cross of Coronado.

The penultimate level takes place in the Grail Temple, a lot like the first level with levels and ladders to be negotiated - though this time with stacks more Nazi troops to worry about. Timing of whip cracking is the essence of success. You have to eye the enemy carefully and press fire when they are just at the right distance from Indy to successfully take them out with your trusty whip.

The final level is the most impressive of the four - as you attempt to escape from the German Zeppelin. The giant flying machine takes up a goodly portion of the screen - albeit causing a bit of flicker - but still graphically convincing despite this.

That's it. Four fairly tough levels of arcade entertainment that provide a reasonable game challenge. Some of the animation is disappointing - particularly the platform leaps. Indy appears to float in a far too precise semicircle from point to point - without even bending his knees when he lands. Sound is not bad, but far from outstanding,and you are left with a definite overall feeling that Indiana Jones' most elusive quarry may turn out to be a really good computer game interpretation of his films - long after the Arc of the Covenant and the Holy Grail are safely on display in Harrison Ford's trophy cabinet.

● Eugene Lacey

AMIGA VERSION

Good use has been made of the graphics capability - with a nice digitised pic of Indy in the bottom right hand corner. The Amiga could have been used to better effect though - particularly in the sound department. More convincing swishing and cracking sound FX on Indy's whip would have been appreciated.

GRAPHICS	6	**IQ FACTOR**	5
AUDIO	5	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 590

ST VERSION

Disappointing scrolling – really jerky, which is not at all necessary as very smooth routines are now available for the ST. Good standard sound FX for the ST.

GRAPHICS	5	**IQ FACTOR**	5
AUDIO	6	**FUN FACTOR**	6

ACE RATING 590

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
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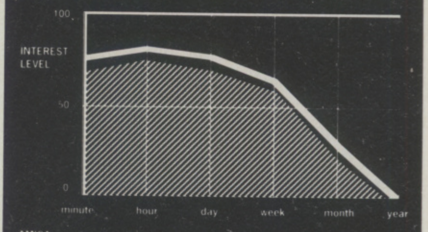
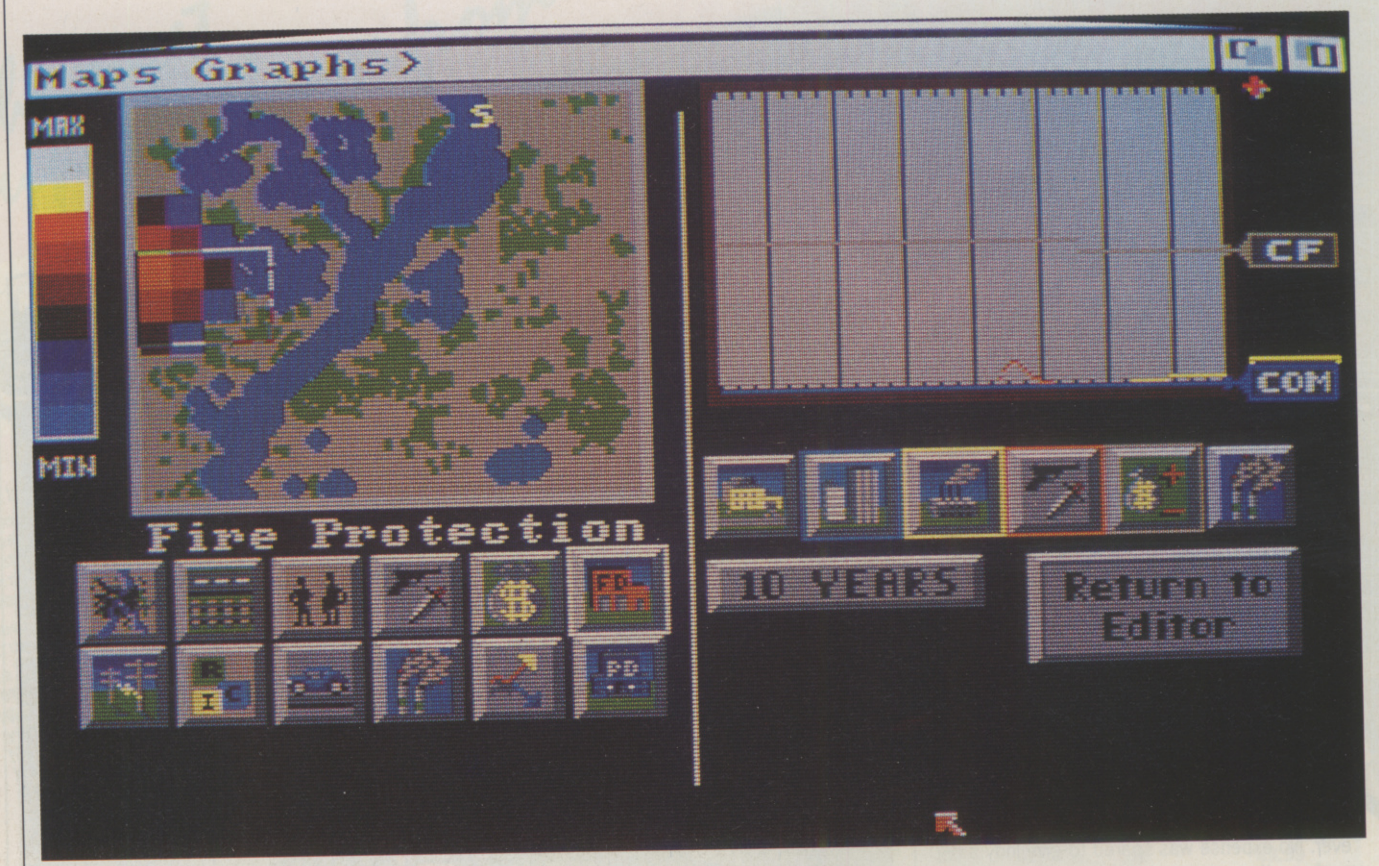
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Arcade adventure that loses its appeal the minute you beat it.



Adequate fire protection is essential in area urban area with a high risk of man-made disasters.

SIMCITY

Play the city in MAXIS' urban simulator.

IF you are sick of London's traffic, Liverpool's unemployment, Belfast's poor housing, or Birmingham's pollution here is your chance to do something about it. SimCity is a politician's – or a gamesplayer's – dream. It enables you to build the perfect city.

Put the roads exactly where you want them (if anywhere). The bridges, railways, factories, housing, power stations – it's all up to you as you become Mayor, Head Town Planner, Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Head of Finance, Transport supremo - and even God (there is a disaster facility).

Your objective is to build your utopia and strive to keep the inhabitants of your city – the 'Sims' – as contented as possible. As with ACE reviews, cities are judged on a scale of 0-1000 and a perfect score is almost impossible to achieve. The evidence of less than perfect cities is far more visible - factory pollution, neighbourhoods turning into slums, ghettoization and unchecked industrial sprawl. Let this go too far and the 'Sims' won't like it. They won't storm the Town Hall but they will 'vote with their feet' and move away from the area - causing tax revenues to plummet and depopulation - a serious situation for an ambitious city father.

Just as in a real town the views of the citizens are surveyed at the end of a session on a number of issues that effect their general level of contentedness. The opinion poll asks questions relating to, for example, traffic, crime, pollution, and housing (enabling you to see where your policies are taking effect) and also asks for the crucial judgement: 'Is the Mayor doing a good job?'.

Comparisons spring immediately to mind with Populous - and there are similarities, but SimCity seems to have much more depth and a degree of usefulness as a simulation that the Electronic Arts game does not.

SimCity is really two separate programs. The first handles the sophisticated pictures on screen. There is a scrolling map showing virgin land with forests, rivers, and coastal inlets all unsullied by the hand of development at the beginning of the game.The right hand flank of the screen shows sixteen icons. These are the building tools of SimCity. They work like the 'pick up and paint' brushes in an art utility - giving you total icon-driven control over Roads, Transit Lines, Power Lines, Parks, Residential Zones,Commercial Zones, Industrial Zones, Fire Departments, Police Departments, Power Plants, Stadiums, Airports, and Sea Ports. A further Bulldozer icon enables you to make rubble of your planning mistakes.

The second and most impressive program in SimCity is the 'brain' of the simulation, the part of the program that evaluates the quality of your planning and city management. This is based on real life data and statistics about crime, population shifts , property values, and traffic. The brain is constantly monitoring decisions against its own set of values

Although your over-all aim is to have as large and prosperous a city as possible you soon hit problems if you indulge in a wild and

AMIGA VERSION

You need 1Mb and even then the Amiga is a bit stretched. The vast amounts of data required to run the program take some time to load into the machine - which is slightly irksome. The wait is well worth it though - once you see your trains running, planes flying, ships sailing, cars driving and 'Sim' people milling around 'Your' town.

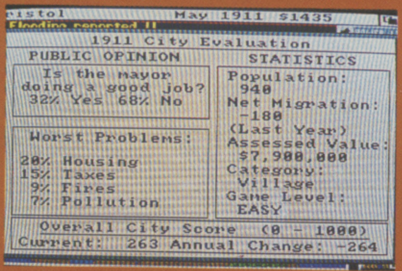
GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	9
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 945

RELEASE BOX

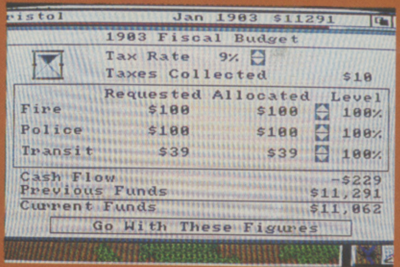
C64/128	£TBA	AUTUMN
AMIGA	£TBA	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBA	AUTUMN

SimCity is distributed in the US by Broderbund. Domark are Broderbund's official UK importer. An announcement from them on UK availability of SimCity is expected imminently.



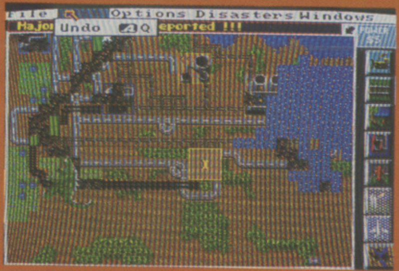
```
ristol           May 1911  $1435
Flooding reported !!
          1911 City Evaluation
   PUBLIC OPINION          STATISTICS
    Is the mayor         Population:
 doing a good job?        940
  32% Yes  68% No        Net Migration:
                          -180
                         (Last Year)
  Worst Problems:        Assessed Value:
                          $7,900,000
 20% Housing             Category:
 15% Taxes                Village
  9% Fires               Game Level:
  7% Pollution            EASY
   Overall City Score   (0 - 1000)
 Current:  263 Annual Change: -264
```

Oh dear. Only 32% of the 'Sim' folk think the Mayor is doing a good job. Makes Mrs T's mid-term unpopularity with the UK electorate look like a love affair.



```
ristol              Jan 1903  $11291
            1903 Fiscal Budget
            Tax Rate    9%
            Taxes Collected              $10
            Requested  Allocated    Level
 Fire          $100        $100     100%
 Police        $100        $100     100%
 Transit        $39         $39     100%
 Cash Flow                           -$229
 Previous Funds                    $11,291
 Current Funds                     $11,062
        Go With These Figures
```

Only $10 of tax revenues are in the municipal coffers - that is not going to go very far when a Police Station costs $1000 to build and a Fire Station costs $100 per annum to maintain.



Good straight roads from the Sea ports, and a large power station have been established- but where are all the 'Sims' going to live?

reckless construction boom. Every decision has a plus side and a down side - and the prudent Mayor considers these options carefully. Take for example the question of power. You may decide that your city needs a nuclear power station. That's fine – a greater supply of cheaper energy for your factories and homes but, also, the risk of a 'Meltdown' - causing fires and destruction of the land for the remainder of the simulation due to radioactive contamination.

There's the airport, of course. No self respecting metropolis would want to be without one - but build it too near the city centre and you risk the ultimate nightmare of a plane crashing down on to your citizens.

If you don't want to design your own city you may decide to play a pre-built one. Once again SimCity provides lots of options. You can choose from San Francisco, Tokyo, Bern, Hamburg, or Detroit. Playing the pre-built cities is not particularly recommended for beginners as they tend to be accompanied with disasters. The great San Francisco earthquake, for example, took place in 1908 – and no prizes for guessing what year the game drops you into if you choose that city. Tokyo has a Godzilla-like monster straight out of the 'B' movie - waiting to rip your factories apart before they can start churning out videos and PC Engines.

Three levels of difficulty are available - based on the amount of money you are given when you start. $20,000 (It is an American game) is considered Easy, $10,000 Medium, and $5,000 Hard. As every city politician knows everything costs - whether it be bulldozing a piece of land or building an airport - everything is measured in money. The budget is driven by your expenditures versus the amount of taxes you collect during a game.

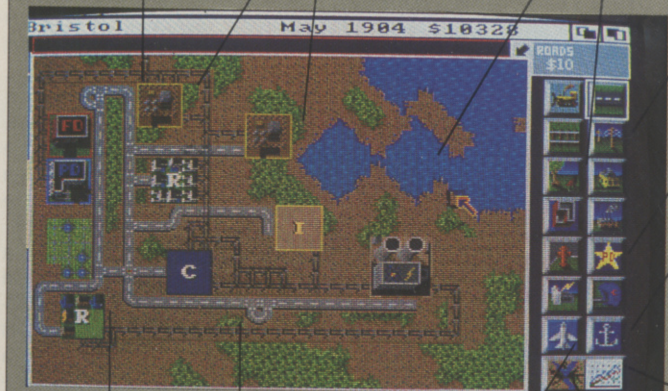
Maxis must have spent hours thinking about all of the elements that are required to make a city work. The detail is phenomenal. They didn't just provide power stations, for example, and leave it at that. There is a design facility to build in the power lines to carry the power from the stations to the factories.

SimCity has been three years in development. Coded by Will Wright for California-based Maxis software. Wright is already a 'name' in hard core gaming circles due to a previous classic title from Broderbund - Raid On Bungling Bay. SimCity looks certain to secure Wright's name for ever in the list of all time greats. It is a seminal simulation - opening new horizons for simulation designers, and has the potential to elevate the whole genre out of its current militaristic ghetto. Already there is talk of the game being used in universities for seminars on town planning.

But the good thing about SimCity is that although the simulation is totally convincing on a realism level it is still a 'game'. Just when you think you are so competent that you really might seriously consider running for the Mayoral office - up pops Godzilla and rips down a few houses to bring you back down to Earth with a bang. Earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters are further reminders of what the Scottish bard warned about "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men".

● Eugene Lacey

MUNICIPAL C.A.D.



1 Power stations may be coal or nuclear - with their associated hazards of pollution or 'meltdown.

2 Park icon A few of these dotted around will keep land and property values high.

3 Power Lines icon. Your stations are worthless without these.

4 Police Department icon. As prosperity grows - so does crime.

5 You need to build a sea port before your city will be visited by ships - increasing trade.

6 Growth rate indicator.

7 This icon calls up the City Form Map - as an aid to planning.

8 Airport icon. Economic growth will level off if you don't build one.

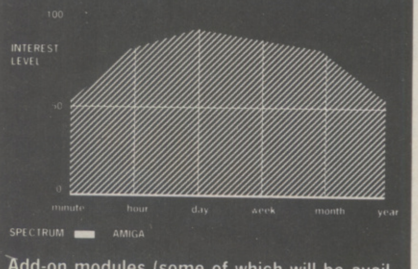
9 Transit Lines icon. Building railways will ease traffic congestion.

10 Residential Zone.

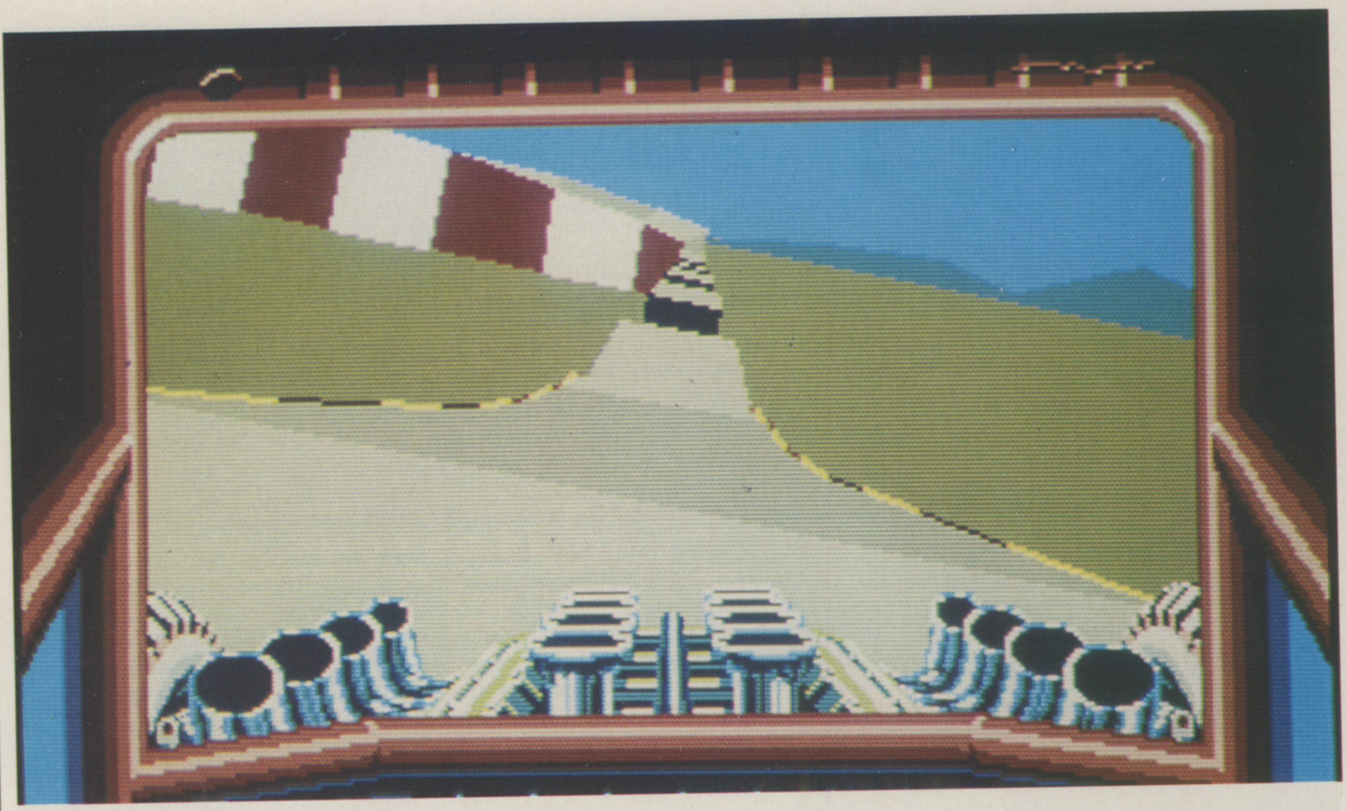
11 Road construction is expensive and needs to be planned carefully.

12 Industrial Zones.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Add-on modules (some of which will be available on bulletin boards) and depth of gameplay ensure that this will run and run.



Put your foot down and you just might clear that jump

STUNT CAR

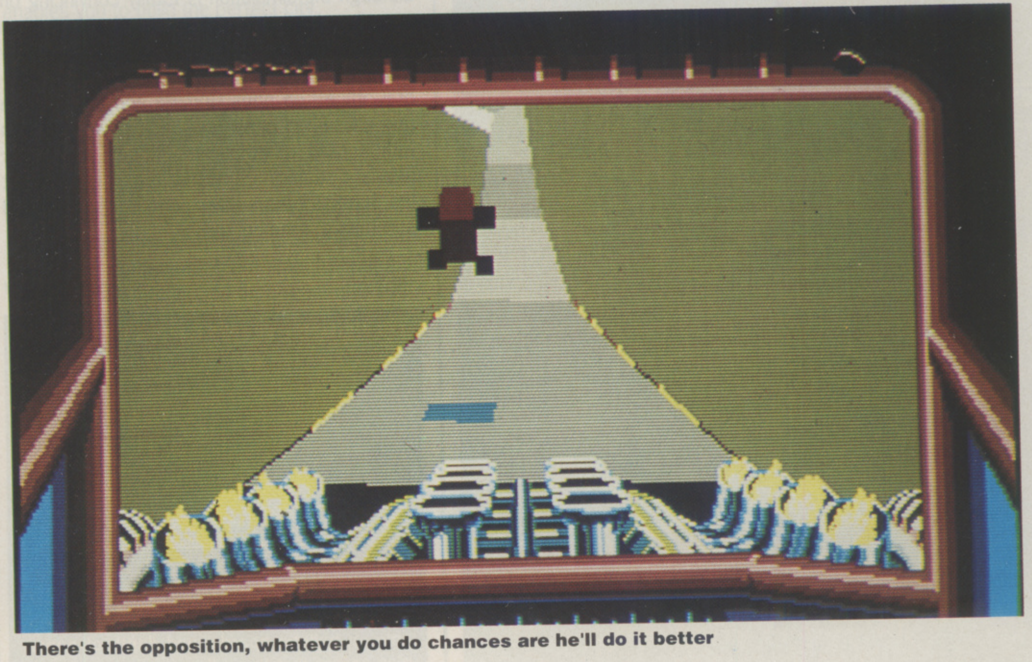
MICROSTYLE get into gear

IN a month that's seen the graduation of some of the leading 8 bit programmers to 16 bit machines (Graftgold and Chris Gray, to name but two) it's good to see Geoff Crammond among them. Geoff was the man behind two 64 classics, *Sentinel* and *Revs*, and it's fitting that he's produced one of the best racing games yet.

Stunt Car is a 3D race simulation with a heavy arcade bias. There's no attempt to create a grand prix game or accurate race track environment. Instead you're presented with a curious set of raised roller coaster tracks and a driving seat view. A few moments on the track though and you'll realise that this is not a 'fun' runaround, the speed and feel is breathtaking – nothing else comes close on a home computer.

The competition is provided by a league system. You start in the fourth division, with three other computer-controlled drivers and your aim is to achieve a string of results to get you promotion and, eventually, to the top of the first division. The game doesn't end there though, there's a superleague which puts you into a car with twice the power of the one you've been used to driving.

Races are run on a straight one-on-one basis with you taking on one of the computer controlled cars. A win is worth two points and there's a save option which makes it easier to progress. You'll need it because *Stunt Car* is a tough challenge – the computer controlled cars don't hang around, whilst you're likely to find that pushing your machine too hard results in disappearing off the



There's the opposition, whatever you do chances are he'll do it better

TARMAC MANIA

The computer passion for race games was first fuelled back in 1982 when Psion released *Chequered Flag* on the Spectrum. It featured an in the cockpit view from a Formula 1 car, a smoothly scrolling 3D perspective road and eight different tracks from around the world. Although it did not feature any opposing cars, *Chequered Flag* could be considered the forerunner to all the modern race simulators.

Meanwhile in the arcades Atari launched their race game, *Pole Position*, amidst a blaze of publicity. Although there had been a few other race games at the time many were monochrome, or so unsure of themselves that they were not in the least bit playable. *Pole Position* afforded the player a behind-the-car view, colourful graphics and a variety of courses to choose from. Best of all though was a feature which would seem commonplace and bland in any modern arcade, it was sit-down. The conception of coupling hydraulics with an arcade game had not even surfaced as a speculation yet, so who could tell what was to come?

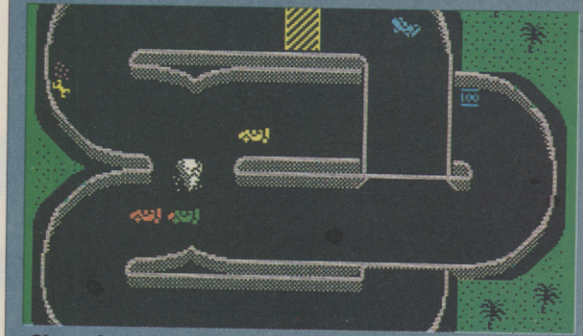
Over the next four or five years home computer race games branched off into two distinct categories; arcade and simulation. Though few and far between, the true simulations offered good quality playing with the likes of *Revs* and *Formula 1 Sim* (which was a budget release). The simulations however did not stand tall against their arcade counterparts. *Pole Position* had by this time been converted from the arcade and became an instant hit. *Pit Stop II* by Epyx was another classic – two player action on a split screen was a hit as well as a novelty with the public.

Then in 1987 the boom came. *Championship Sprint* appeared in the arcades with three steering wheels, impossibly unrealistic play, and a lot of fun. Following on from that *Outrun* appeared. The sound and graphics wiped the floor with all other games – and not just the ones in the race category. The newly-created hydraulic movement system had been ported over from the early *Space Harrier* machines making *Outrun* the essential piece of hardware in nearly every arcade in the western world.

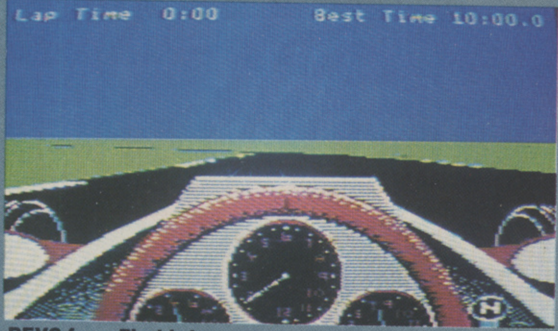
The home computer conversions of all these titles whetted peoples' taste for fast action race games – but the conversions themselves could not really supply this. The only real way to answer the calls from the masses was to start producing original race games for the home computer.

Ferrari Formula 1 was launched by Electronic Arts. It was a mixture of managerial and race car simulation, featuring customise options and just about anything else you could care to mention. After that came Accolade's *Test Drive*, a game that offered you a choice of some of the world's most expensive cars to drive at your leisure and possibly wreck too.

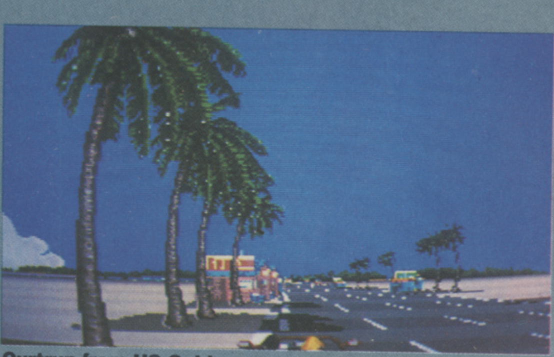
It looks like the road to the nineties has been tarmacced over with added interest. The arcades have spawned *Continental Circus* (which should have been called Continental Circuit) and its 3D glasses and graphics. *Hard Driving* which is possibly the best real simulation of driving in the arcades to date. Clutch, five gears fantastically smooth and fast filled vectors. The soon to be launched *Super Monaco Grand Prix* from Sega is a guaranteed hit (see page 22 for further information). On computer now you have the excellent *Grand Prix Circuit* (see page 47), *Stunt Car* (p68), *Hard Driving*, *'Vette* and possibly a few others before the year is out. What next? Multi-player race units? Intelligent vehicles? The chequered flag hasn't fallen yet...



Championship Sprint



REVS from Firebird



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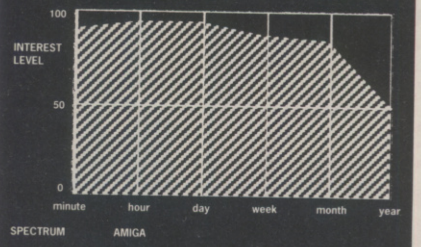
ST VERSION

Those who maintain the ST can't scroll smoothly should take a look at this. Any suggestions of that nature are dispelled by the fact that Geoff Crammond has created the fastest racing game to be found outside an arcade. Blows away all four-wheel opposition.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	8
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	9

ACE RATING 905

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Stunt Car is in that rare category of game that offers simple thrills and demands nothing except continual playing!

edge of the track. A nasty grinding noise along with sparks is the only penalty if you run up against the edge of the tarmac, but going over the edge results in a frustrating wait while you're winched back onto the track. The huge jumps on the tracks and the speed that you have to maintain to compete means that you're going to have to be winched back many times in your attempts to top the league.

The beauty of Stunt Car is its amazingly fast update. The effect as you pick up speed is astonishing. You can almost feel the acceleration, and the roller coaster construction exaggerates the speed still further. The solid 3D ably supports the effect, and whilst detail is sparse, there's no detraction because it's so effective. Remember the chase in Bullet with Steve McQueen's Mustang barrelling up and down the hills of San Francisco? It's that quick!

There's not a tremendous amount of sound, but the spot effects augment the appeal of the game, with a solid acceleration sound that suggests you're actually driving something with a fair turn of speed. That impression is further added to with the brutal looking straight eight engine with its upturned exhausts which thrusts up menacingly from the bottom of the screen. Hit the turbo button and flames lick evilly from the exhaust pipes.

Whilst there are a variety of track designs with several more on the data disk, there is a slight problem with the sparsity and perhaps the lack of variety surrounding the game, but the strength of the simulation is enough to assuage that. Stunt Car is likely to remain one hell of a racing game for some time.

● Mike Pattenden

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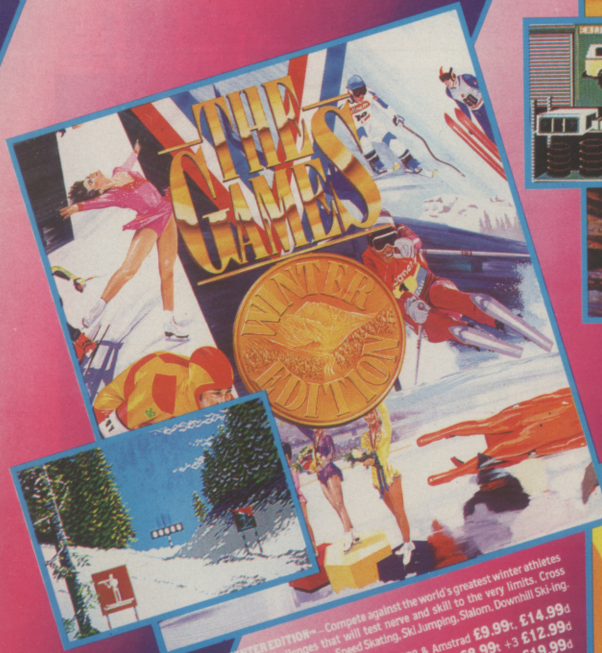

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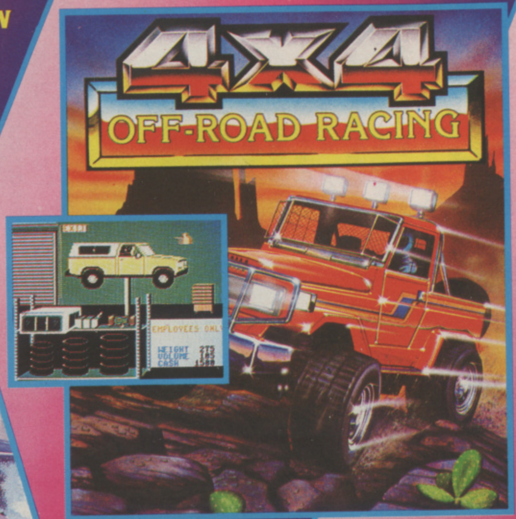
Screen shots from various formats.



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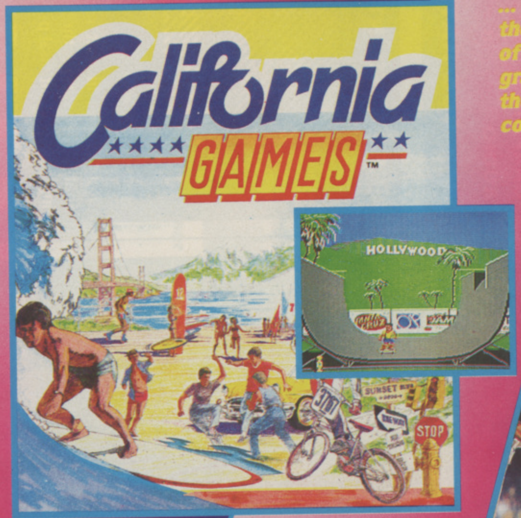

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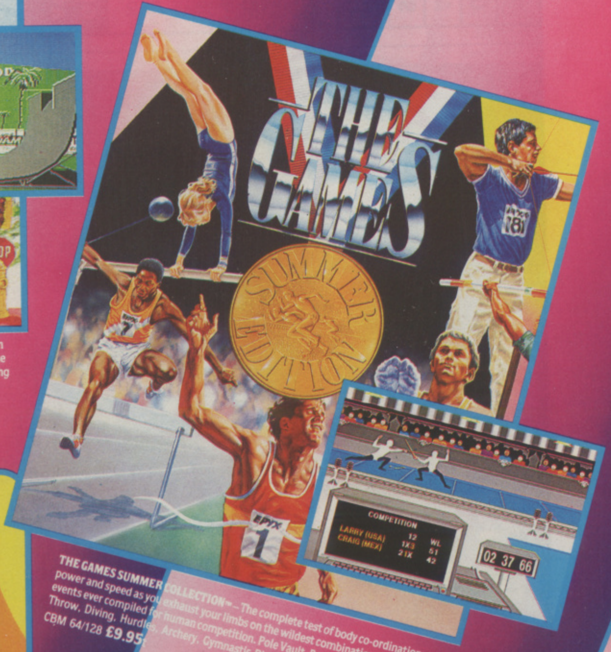

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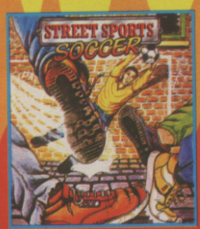
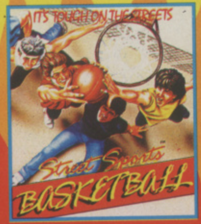
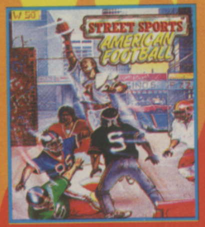


IT'S TOUGH ON THE STREETS
Street Sports
BASEBALL





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MEGASOUNDS

PUT AN ORCHESTRA IN YOUR BEDROOM FOR UNDER £350.

OK. You've bought your sequencing software, MIDI interface, etc. All you need now is a keyboard or something to make the sounds and input the data into the sequencer. Like any serious pursuit, the amount of money you could spend is a bottomless pit into which tens of thousands of pounds can be pitched without any problem, but Jon Bates has the sound solution...

Here at ACE Towers we are only too aware of the concept of financial hardship and at sometime one has to return to reality with a bump when the flexibility of the plastic money is subjected to destruction testing routines. Bearing that in mind, we've put a limit of £350 on the set ups in this piece, based on current list prices, but also acknowledging the most often quoted lower price; of course these may well be bettered by special offers. There is also a second-hand guide.

ACE MUSICAL ADD-ON GUIDE UNDER £350

The Cheetah MkV keyboard, £149.95, is the basic MIDI mother keyboard. It suffers a little bit by having an oddly positioned pitchbend and program changes are a bit fiddly. It is not touch sensitive but it does have five octaves of full size keys. They also market a MS6 tone module which has a goodly range of analogue type sounds on board but no percussion for £2.99. The Kawai K1M has been a very popular tone module with an astonishing range of sounds, both sampled and synthesized. It has the ability to fashion and store your own sounds and there are voice programmers and

WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT?

Put quite simply the answer is a keyboard and a multi-timbral synthesizer of sorts. The keyboard bit is reasonably obvious, the multi-timbral bit means that the generator of tones should be able to make several sounds simultaneously. It is rather pointless having a sequencer that can play back 16 separate MIDI instruments simultaneously when all your instrument can do is one sound at a time. If this is the case - you are probably better off with a multitrack tape recorder!

There are several combinations and possibilities to achieve this. Budget aside for a minute, you could go for a synthesizer like say the Roland D10 which is both a touch sensitive keyboard and multi-timbral module in one. Snag is that it costs well over twice our budget. This will be the case for pretty well any synthesizer with these assets.

Maybe you could have a separate 'mother keyboard'; ie one that doesn't generate sounds in itself but acts as controller. The cheapest on the market is still the Cheetah MkV at £99. This will perform all our requirements bar touch sensitivity.

In fact a touch sensitive keyboard is rather a stumbling block on the price as it requires a reasonably complex piece of hard and software that calculates the speed of each note as they are played. This will establish the velocity. For the pressure placed on the note - aftertouch - the keyboard will need to have a pressure bar placed under the keys, giving you channel pressure in MIDI code. For the luxury of polyphonic aftertouch you would need a pad under each note, which in turn means more money to shell out. I'm afraid that we will probably have to resign ourselves to the fact that touch-sensitivity is a luxury that we may have to do without.

If you opt for a mother keyboard there is also a tone module to be purchased. There are quite a few of that come within our budget and these are listed and described.

The other option is to use what is known as a single keyboard - those self-accompany keyboards with drums, auto bass and chord patterns. The price at which the come equipped with MIDI is getting less and less. MIDI equipped single keyboards have several points in their favour. They will allow you to access several tone generators and thus behave like a simplified tone module, they will let you get at the drums individually and program your own patterns without using a separate drum machine, finally you can pick them up and take them away as a stand-alone instrument - they have their own internal speakers. Some makes will transmit the patterns from the auto section via MIDI, some don't. This is quite interesting as some drum, bass and chord patterns are worth lifting out and filing away - they can often provide an interesting bank of ideas to play around with. Not only that but you can share the instrument with somebody else and maybe split the cost. Whatever approach you prefer, here is the ACE "pick and mix" round up of budget conscious musical add-ons.

Kawai's K1 keyboard gives you the sound capacity of the K1M and a touch sensitive keyboard – but it'l cost you another £200. The K1M module gives you the sound without the keys for a lot less.

THE ACE SECOND HAND GUIDE TO MUSICAL ADD-ONS

Yamaha FB01
Not a bad idea although the 196 voices are a little thin. 8-note polyphony shared across eight channels of MIDI and 16 set-ups possible. New voices can be programmed buy only with the right software.
PRICE GUIOE: £125

Yamaha TX81Z
A far better bet with its useful set of voices and performance memories. Will also rack-mount for convenience and accept voices for the DX100. Basically it is a DX11 in a box and as such is fuly-velocity and aftertouch sensing.
PRICE GUIDE: £275

It is probably worth avoiding the single timbre synths and the TX7 tone module as a first buy – they will severly limit your capabilities.

Casio CZ101
A good bargain. It will perform a limited amount of multi-timbrality; four monophonic notes simultaneously. The real joy is that it can be programmed from voicing software to gbe a far better product than Casio ever intended.
PRICE GUIDE: £120 or less.

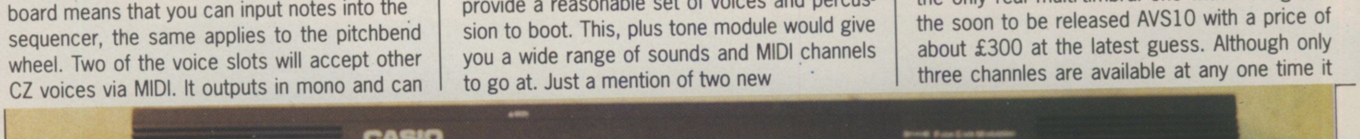
libraries available. At £375 the list price is well over the top but it is usually sold at £299. This would no leave financial room for a keyboard though. However watch out for what first appears like a dinky toy keyboard. The Kawai PH50 £295 is an absolute killer! It boasts stereo sound with 16 bit resolution, an onboard selection of 200 voices ranging from piano, woodwind, strings, brass synth sounds (mimicking Messrs Hammer and Corea) plus some genuinely imaginative effects and preset combinations of percussion, all of which are pretty well faultless. And that's not all. It has the addition of 30 or so percussion voices. It will behave as a stand alone keyboard but it has obviously been designed with the computer/sequencer in mind. The four octave mini keyboard has two stages of velocity, there is the pitchbend and modulation joystick plus twenty on-board rhythm patterns. However the MIDI specs will allow the instrument to become a four-part multi-timbral instrument sharing the sixteen note polyphony as required plus the percussion channel. All the features of aftertouch, pitchbend, modulation, volume, sustain and program change can be implemented. I've ordered mine already! It is also available in a rack mount module, the PHM for £275.

Roland contribute to the fray with the well established MT23 (recommended retail price £449 but available at £299). Plenty of sounds on offer (200 plus) and a percussion department that is hard to better. the MT32 is only a tone module so you would need to weigh that against the price of the keyboard. However the sounds are very good, especially for synth sounds; I've never been sold on their orchestral department although the pianos are good. It has a volatile memory for your own voices so some sort of voicing program and librarian is vital for serious work. It's smarter cousin, the D10 is the rack-mount version but with vastly increased sound sources, It can remember up to 64 performance set ups and has 6 separate audio outs. Programming is a pain so again programming software and a librarian is a must. The fly in the ointment is it's price of £450 at best but is has been around long enough to be available second hand if you're quick.

The land of Casio is brimming with things to bolt on to your computer. The 99 preset voices of the CZ230S single keyboard are accessible via MIDI and so are the drums, giving you a total of 5 channels to play with. Having a keyboard means that you can input notes into the sequencer, the same applies to the pitchbend wheel. Two of the voice slots will accept other CZ voices via MIDI. It outputs in mono and can also be a single keyboard with auto patterns, programmable rhythms and song memory in it's own right. The voices are OK but not so stunning now as when it first appeared. Although the list price is £350, the last stocks of this are being discounted at £199, which will give you plenty of change from our financial ceiling of £350.

Two new tone modules have just been launched by Casio, the CMS1 at £185.95 and the CMS10P for £249.95. The former is essentially the CT660 keyboard in a box with a whole host of PCM generated voices plus percussion department. It is multi-timbral on four channels with four notes maximum for each channel. Whilst the drums are good maybe the voices are a bit on the soggy side it it's real instruments you're after. The CSM10P is the CPS700 piano in a box with five sampled pianos to play with sounding quite reasonable although I suspect that most of you would want more than just pianos no matter how good they sounded. The bargain basement is really shown off by Casio with the cheapest MIDI equipped keyboard at present. For £129 the mini-keyed MT240 will interface with your sequencer and provide a reasonable set of voices and percussion to boot. This, plus tone module would give you a wide range of sounds and MIDI channels to go at. Just a mention of two new keyboards from them that will also become multi-timbral via MIDI - I have not yet seen them but they are the CT650 at £249 with 10 not polyphonic and the MT740 costing £199 with five octaves of mini keys. Rumours are flying around that Casio will also be the first to the magical £100 mark for a MIDI keyboard. Watch for further news.

Meanwhile, over in the red corner the big 'Y' have one or two keyboards and modules that will come in under budget for our musical set up. At present Yamaha market two single keyboards that have full MIDI specs and cost under £350, the PSR 480 at £149 and the PSR 680 at £199. both are mini-keyed instruments and have five channels of MIDI available to the external user. They are also in stereo and will also do such things as voice dumps. The 680 will actually do a little more than the manual lets on as a MIDI dump of the demo tune shows (I am currently investigating this). both have pitchbend and a generous set of voices and incredible playing styles in both accompaniment and rhythm. The prices could well tumble on these as they are to be superceded in the not too distant future. As for tone modules, the only real multi-timbral one within budget is the soon to be released AVS10 with a price of about £300 at the latest guess. Although only three channles are available at any one time it



Casio's new MT keyboards give tremendous value for money. This one boasts a set of special effects that range from busy street scenes to rain forests – and has a great rhythm section too.

NEXT MONTH:

ACE looks at how various people have set up home studios and how you could follow in their footstpes, armed with your computer together with a modicum of ego and cheek!X

CONTACTS:

Cheetah 0222 555525
Yamaha Kemble: 0908 71771
Casio 01 450 9131
Roland 01 568 4578
Kawai 0202 296629
Farfisa 0282 35431

is eight note polyphonic on each one, has a digital programmable reverb built-in and 64 programmable performance patches made up from any combination of it's sampled voices. The voices are essentially of the orchestral variety. It could be an unaffordable luxury if the budget is tight, though. Although I did not find all the bvoices to my particular taste, it must be said that for £349 Farfisa have a fully MIDI-fied single keyboard with four ocatves of full-size keys, the TK100.

If that seems all a little too pricey, they there is always the second-hand columns. Here single keyboards are not such a bargain as MIDI was only fitted to the up-market variety and even then the specs were quite restricted. It could be that a S/H tone module plus a drum machine or newer single keyboard will prove a satisfactory combination.

CASIO
DIGITAL SOUND MODULE CSM-1
CASIO
PIANO SOUND MODULE CSM-10P
CASIO
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IN
TUNE
SUSTAIN
FOOT VOLUME
LINE OUT

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ATTENTION

NEC PC ENGINE ANNOUNCEMENT.

NEC Corporation, NEC Home Electronics Ltd, and NEC (UK) Ltd (collectively 'NEC' hereinafter) have recently become aware that the PC ENGINE is being offered for sale in the United Kingdom. NEC believe that it is important that UK consumers should be aware of the following information.

1. The PC ENGINE is a product manufactured by NEC Home Electronics Ltd for use with the NTSC transmission system. It is not compatible with the UK PAL transmission system nor any other non NTSC transmission system. For this reason, NEC Corporation does not market the PC ENGINE in the UK or in any other EEC countries.

2. There are no authorised distributors of the PC ENGINE in the United Kingdom at present.
Therefore, if you are offered a PC ENGINE which is said to be compatible with the PAL system or any transmission system other than NTSC, you should be aware that it will have been modified by a third party.
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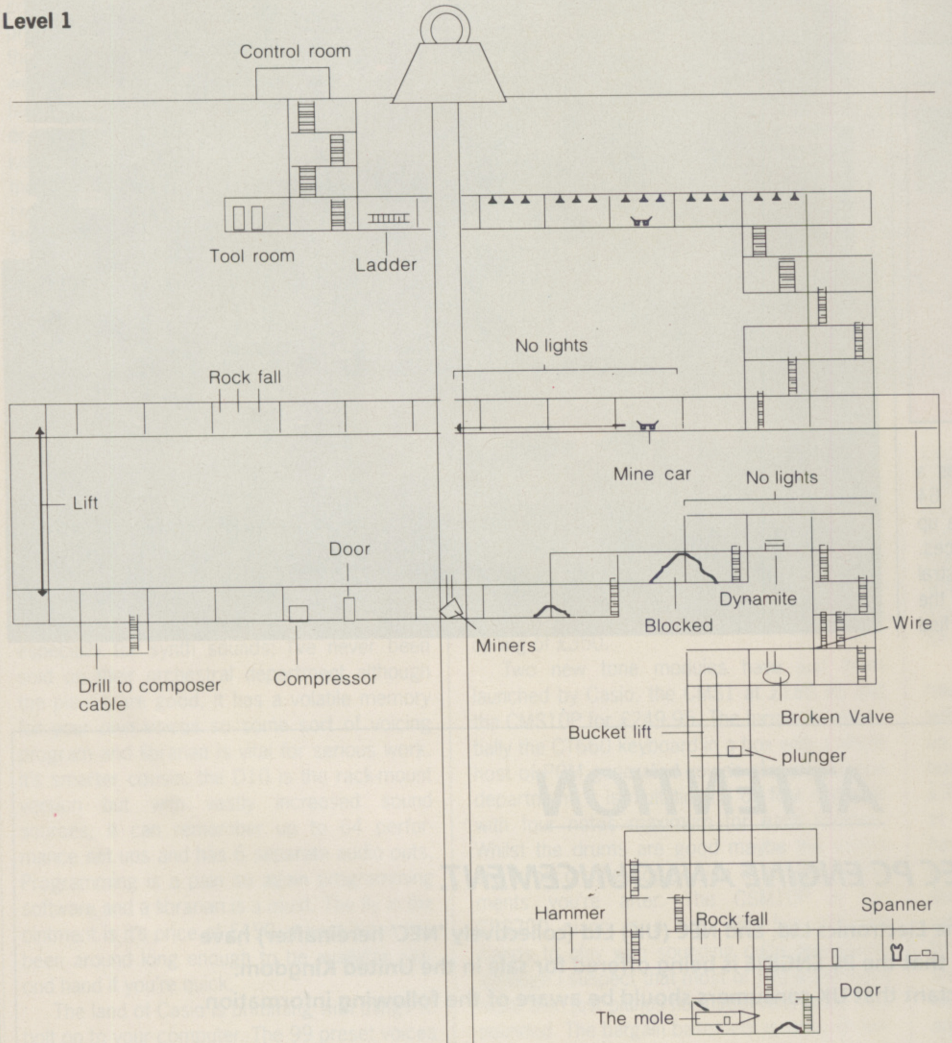
THUNDERBIRDS

Maps and tips for the first two levels. Aren't you just the lucky ones.

Level 1


Control room
Tool room
Ladder
No lights
Rock fall
Lift
Mine car
No lights
Door
Dynamite
Wire
Blocked
Miners
Drill to composer cable
Compressor
Broken Valve
Bucket lift
plunger
Hammer
Rock fall
Spanner
Door
The mole

Level 1

The first problem is stopping the water level from rising. This is easily solved by first getting the spanner, followed by the hammer. Proceed up the mine until you reach the bucket lift. Utilise the hammer to fix the lift. Go to to the top of the shaft (don't collect the plunger!) and then right to the broken valve. Use the spanner to activate the valve. Now go back and collect the plunger.

To clear the rock fall use the dynamite (which is in the dark area) in conjunction with the plunger to clear a path.

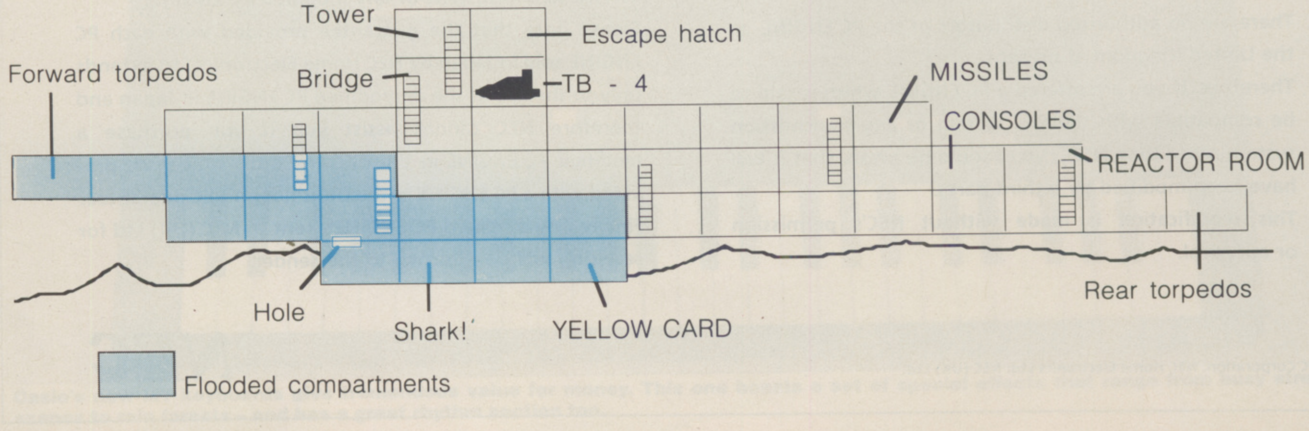
Level 2

The key to the success of this mission is to a) shut down the reactor, b) save the remaining crew, c)refloat the Oceanic star.

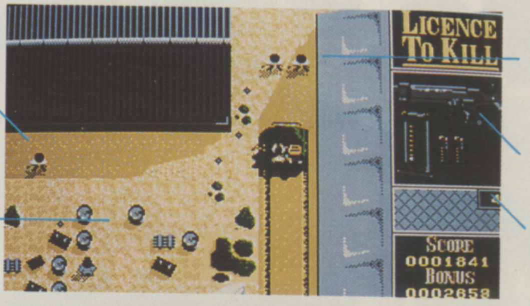
All the torpedos need to be armed, and in turn launched in order to lighten the weight of the sub. To shut the reactor down you need to have taken the radiation pills otherwise your energy will drop as you get closer.

The trickiest job that needs doing is emptying the flooded compartments. This is achieved by flicking the relevant switches by the doors which in turn floods or empties the compartments. Flooding the ship is not acceptable and means instant game over.

Level 2


Tower
Escape hatch
Forward torpedos
Bridge
TB - 4
MISSILES
CONSOLES
REACTOR ROOM
Rear torpedos
Hole
Shark!
YELLOW CARD
Flooded compartments

LICENCE TO KILL


LICENCE TO KILL
SCORE
0001841
BONUS
0002658

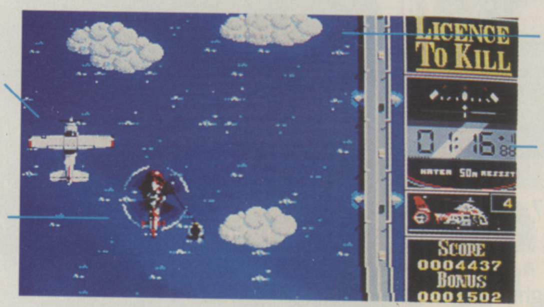
Stand here to blast the jeep. If you shoot this guard he will drop an extra magazine of ammo.

Careful by these oil drums. Three direct hits and they explode

Take this pair out from the foot of the screen. Charging the enemy will make them run for cover.

Status window - showing number of rounds left in 007's weapon.

Number of lives left

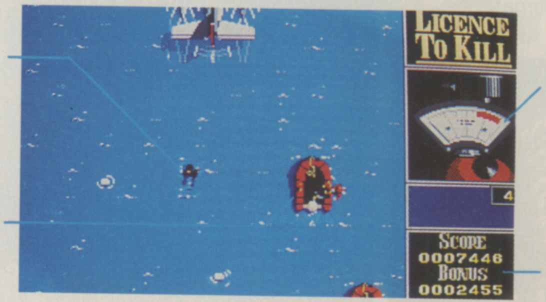

LICENCE TO KILL
0:16:88
SCORE
0004437
BONUS
0001502

Catch Sanchez plane. Force him to parachute out and go after it.

Hold your chopper back - and wait for Sanchez' plane to cross your flight path before hooking up.

Avoid the clouds. You cannot 'hook-up' when you fly under them.

Timer. You have to catch Sanchez before the clock ticks down to zero

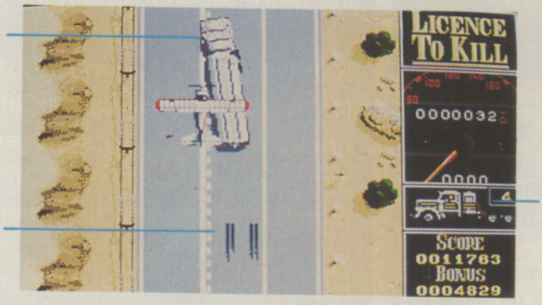

LICENCE TO KILL
4
SCORE
0007446
BONUS
0002455

Knife the divers and take their harpoon guns

Snipers take pot shots at you from the speeding launches. Duck under water to dodge.

Oxygen level. Swim above water to replenish supply.

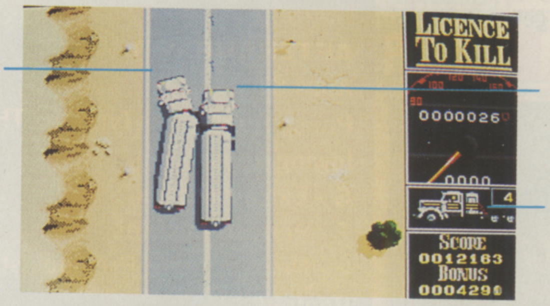
Bonus points can be earned by splitting the bags of drugs.


LICENCE TO KILL
0000032
4
SCORE
0011763
BONUS
0004829

Hook up with that truck, take the wheel and its bumping buggy time.

Tire marks will make your truck swerve.

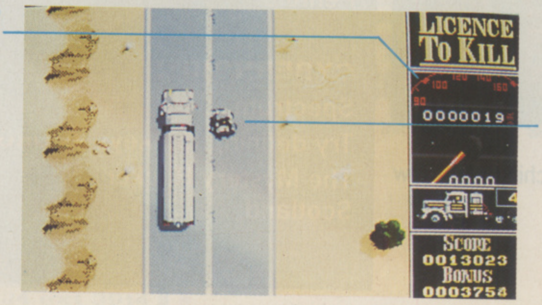
Damage to your vehicle is shown in this window. Don't try anything too risky if your truck is showing damage.


LICENCE TO KILL
0000026
4
SCORE
0012163
BONUS
0004290

The road twists and turns. Watch out for directional arrows as a guide.

Barge the drug truck off the road.

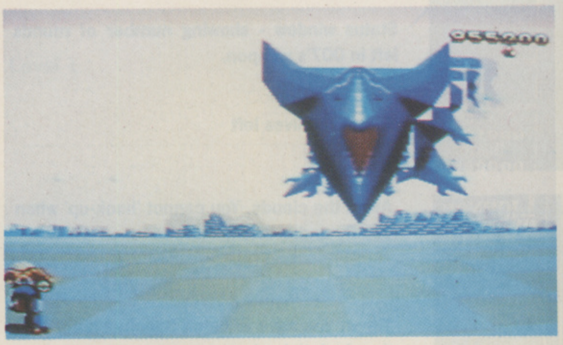
Destroy all the drug baron's trucks and jeeps for a near perfect score.


LICENCE TO KILL
0000019
4
SCORE
0013023
BONUS
0003754

Milometer shows number of miles to go before you reach your destination.

Sanchez' jeep is armed with a powerful rocket launcher. Push him off the road before he gets to use it.

SEGA SHORTS



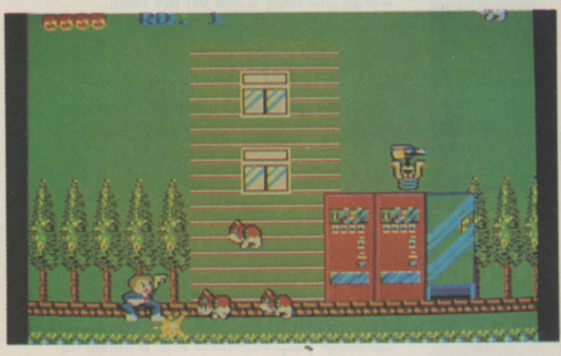
SPACE HARRIER

Call up a sound test and select tunes FX7, 3, 3, 7, 4, 8 and 1. Now a screen comes up allowing you to change the game parameters. When you finish a game press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, down, up, down to continue. This works up to nine times.

R-TYPE

Plug both joycards in. Hold control pad one diagonally down and right while holding pad two up right. Hold down button one and switch the Sega on. Keep everything pressed until the R-Type logo comes up. Now start the game armed to the teeth!

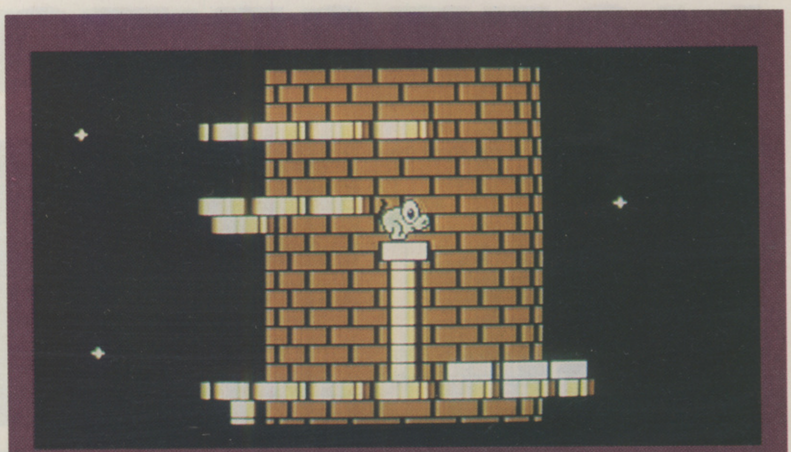
On level four you come to a screen packed from top to bottom with green dots. Halfway up there is a gap in the landscape fly up and in to get to a bonus level.



MY HERO

jump over the knife thrower without touching him. Now punch him in the back for an extra life.

The Pokester
Norwich



SWEET SHORTIES

NEBULUS

Atari ST

This ought to help anybody on the verge of suicide brought on by Jon Phillip's excellent game.

On the title screen type HELLOIAMJMP the press any key from F1-F10 corresponding to the level you want.

David Riley
Wigan

CHAN &CHAN

PC Engine

The Japanese version of the two Ronnies seems to be causing more problems than the real McCoy.

Half way through world 3-3 there's a lift – found it? Use the lift to go up a through screens. To the right you'll see two bricks. You are then attacked by two rats. A carefully timed jump will bounce you off the rats and onto the bricks. Then jump off the screen from here and presto! World 6-4!

Gary Hall
Isle Of Man

AFTERBURNER

Atari ST

Pause game and Type in "THUNDERBLADE" and try the following keys:

G - Extra missiles
T - Reduce missiles
< - Next stage> - Previous stageN - Extra lives

Penfold

CYBERNOID 2

Spectrum

Try defining the keys as ORGY (!) to get infinite lives.

The Mystery Hacker
Scotland

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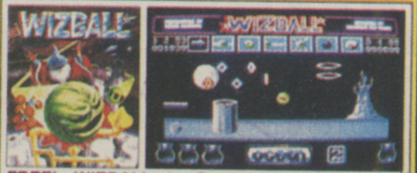
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The Amiga 500 is one of a new breed of technologically advanced computers, which are now emerging as the new standard for home computing, based around the new Motorola 68000 chip. The A500 has 512K RAM and a 1Mbyte double sided disk drive built-in. It can be connected directly to a wide range of monitors, or to a domestic TV set through a TV modulator. Designed with the user in mind, the A500 features a user friendly WIMP environment and comes supplied with a free mouse. And, when you buy your Amiga from Silica Shop, the UK's No1 Amiga specialists, you will experience an after sales service that is second to none, including a technical support helpline and free newsletters and price lists. Return the coupon below for our current information pack, which will give details of the Silica service and the very latest Silica Amiga offers. E&OE

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THE FULL STOCK RANGE: The largest range of Amiga related peripherals, accessories, books and software in the UK.

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	£229.50

TOTAL RRP: £229.50 INC VAT

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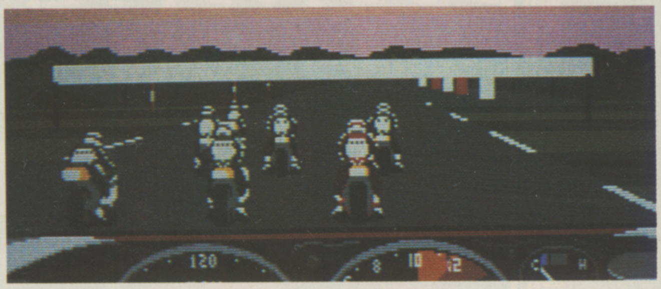
Do you already own a computer
If so, which one do you own?

RVF



This two-wheeled wonder from Micro-Style is proving to be more than a bit difficult. So buckle your belt, read these tips and you'll be burning tread in no time.

The most important skill is to be able to anticipate and shave tight corners. When approaching a tight bend, lose speed as soon as you see the bend markers appear. The bend markers are the large white boxes which appear in groups of three, two and one, counting down to a bend.

When the bend appears, swing out into the middle of the track, then slingshot into the bend while accelerating. In most cases the bike has picked up sufficient speed by the time the bend straightens out giving you a head start over the opposition.

Sometimes braking before a bend isn't enough by itself. You have to drop a gear, or two. Dropping into first practically guarantees the rest of the field gaining time on you. On the opposite end, don't brake in fifth gear as it takes too long for the revs to build up again. Try third or second as a safe option and it saves you from burning the gearbox out.

KICK OFF

Kick off. Hardly the most realistic football game to surface, but quite definitely the most fun. This should help you get a result...

One of the favoured methods of goal scoring is from the kick off. Run straight up (or down) the centre of the pitch, dribbling the ball in a straight line. When the six yard box is about to appear tap the fire quickly to launch a deadly shot on goal. To a player who hasn't seen this tactic before it's just a case of beating the goalie. The best way to prevent somebody from using this against you is to slide them as soon as possible.

A close passing game in the penalty area is another preferred way of scoring, though this only really works with four or more players in the immediate area. By utilising a trap-the-ball/pass system it won't be long before the ball lands at the feet of a player in front of the goal.

One very sneaky way of scoring is to trap the ball and stop in your opponent's penalty area. Check how many of his players are near. If some seem to be closing in fast, wait, otherwise shoot. Hopefully the computer players should attempt a slide tackle, thus awarding you a penalty which will be difficult to save.

When taking a corner always select the icon which appears to be pointing in an up diagonal towards the goal. If you're lucky the wind will curl the ball into the net for you. If you're not so lucky there may be another way. You should find yourself in control of a player facing the goal. Get the timing right as the ball passes the near post, push forward and fire. The player will either head or chest the ball into the back of the net. To avoid the corner when somebody else is taking it, hold the joystick in the direction of the corner and repeatedly hit fire. Your goalie should make a dive at, and hopefully catch, the ball.

OPPORTUNITY POKES!

If you can map, crack, poke or solve games we need you! We're looking for a team of games masters who can contribute to the already high standard of information presented in ACE.

So if you enjoy meeting a challenge you could earn yourself recognition, the latest software and money!

Send examples of your work plus your name and address to:-

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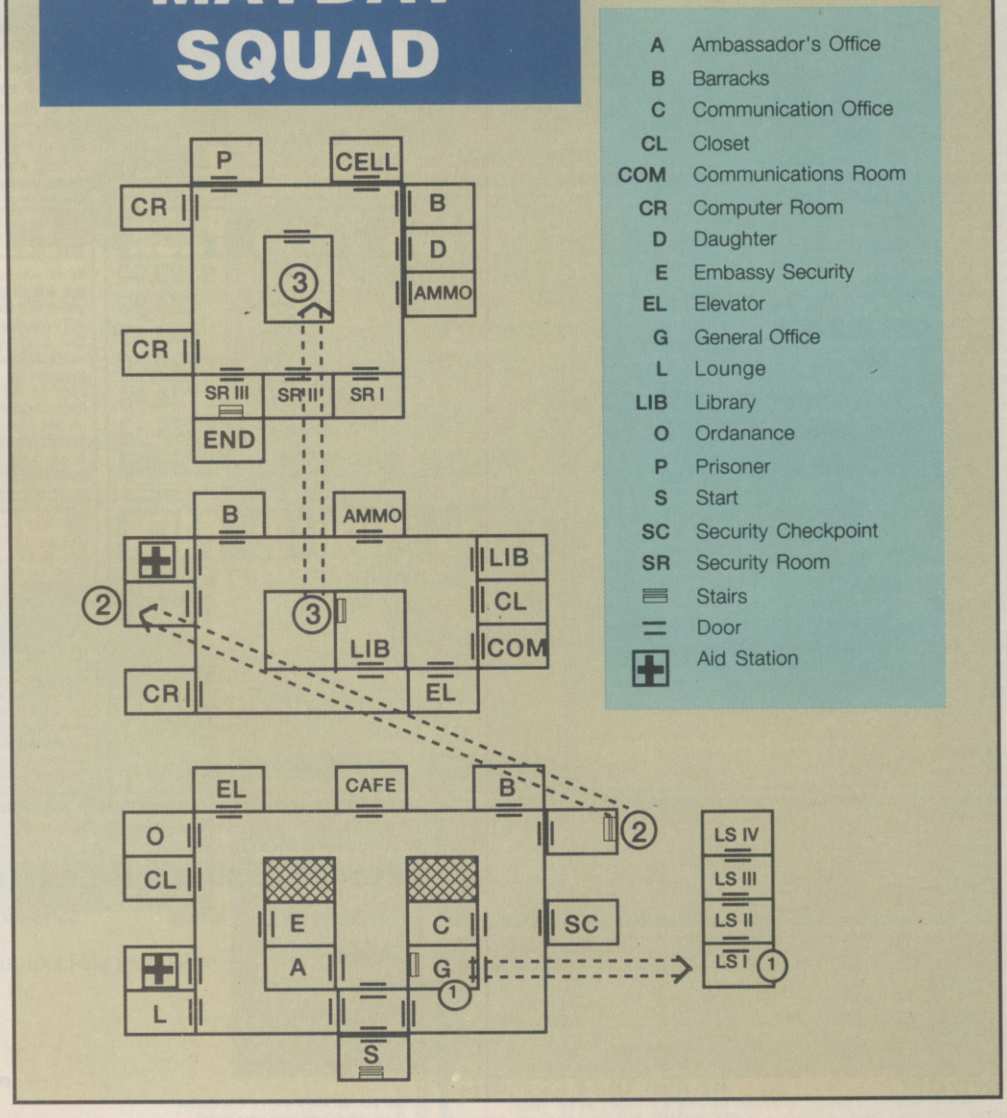
MAYDAY SQUAD



A	Ambassador's Office
B	Barracks
C	Communication Office
CL	Closet
COM	Communications Room
CR	Computer Room
D	Daughter
E	Embassy Security
EL	Elevator
G	General Office
L	Lounge
LIB	Library
O	Ordanance
P	Prisoner
S	Start
SC	Security Checkpoint
SR	Security Room
▤	Stairs
=	Door
✚	Aid Station

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ATARI ST

ST COMPUTERS

The range of Atari ST computers offers something for everyone. From the games enthusiast who wants the challenge of the very best in arcade action, to the businessman who wants to make financial forecasts or faultless presentations. The ST offers high quality graphics, sound and speed for the gamer, whilst providing a fast, user friendly and affordable solution to business. The ST is now firmly established in the home environment and boasts a wealth of users in education, local government, television, and a variety of different businesses. Software for the range stretches to cover applications as diverse as ENTERTAINMENT, ACCOUNTS, ART, COMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN, DATABASES, DESKTOP PUBLISHING, EDUCATION, MUSIC, PROGRAMMING, SPREADSHEETS, WORD PROCESSING and more. For a full list of the software available, as well as details of the ST range, complete and return the coupon below.

All prices correct at the time of going to press. E&OE.

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NOW WITH TV MODULATOR

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520ST-FM EXPLORER PACK
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ATARI
ATARI EXPLORER

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+mono monitor = £998
+colour monitor = £1198

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DTP PageStream £149 +VAT =£171.35

Desktop Publishing (DTP) is one of the fastest growing applications for personal computers. We are pleased to announce a powerful low cost package for the Atari ST called PageStream. PageStream costs only £149 (+VAT=£171.35) and, because it works with an Atari 1040ST and a Seikosha SP-180AI printer, you can be up and running with a complete system for less than £1000. Some of the features of PageStream are listed to the right. If you would like further information on this program, complete and return the coupon below, ticking the 'DTP' box in the corner.

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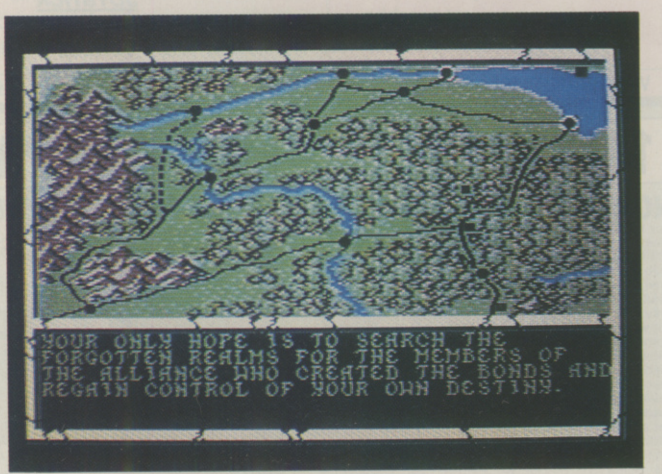
ADVENTURE

US GOLD LAUNCH THE SECOND AD&D RPG – HOW DOES IT PLAY?

We're now settling down into the new format, despite shortage of space this month. We're still looking for a new name for the section (suggestions welcome), but each month we'll be giving you at least one RPG article, accompanied by the RPG-uide rating boxes, specially designed to give these games the complex ratings they need; a number of new reviewers, each an expert in their own field (it's RPG-fanatic Violet Staunton this month), regular tips, and, when space allows, the Adventure Conference. Let's have your letters/comments...

CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS

US Gold release another role-playing adventure in the popular AD&D series.



YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO SEARCH THE
FORGOTTEN REALMS FOR THE MEMBERS OF
THE ALLIANCE WHO CREATED THE BONDS AND
REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR OWN DESTINY.

Despite the good gameplay, the AD&D games still lack punch in the graphics department.

The long awaited sequel to *Pool of Radiance*, the first Advanced Dungeons and Dragons role playing product has finally arrived. You don't need to have *Pool of Radiance* to play *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, but if you do then characters can be loaded in and used if you so wish.

Curse begins with you awakening with strange blue markings on your arm that you can't remove. Your quest is to find a way to get rid of the marks without resorting to the very extreme approach of hacking off your arm. There's also money and friends to be made by finding the Princess Nacacia of Cormyr for her rather distraught father.

Anyone that has played *Pool of Radiance* will be instantly familiar with the game system which revolves around a series of menus and sub menus which are accessed via the cursors and Return key.

Before you can get underway you have to equip your party who have had all their belongings stolen, but fortunately (and conveniently) they've found a cache of treasure to finance them. Weapons are found in a nearby building along with armour and cash can be well spent in stocking up. Not too far away you'll also find a school to train you when you've earned yourself some experience. As you go along and explore the town it's worthwhile making a map so that you can find the places later.

After you've been playing for a while you'll realise the sinister significance of the azure bonds, for when they glow you must do as they command and they'll get you into lots of trouble with the guards and various other personalities in town.

Included with the game is a booklet entitled the Adventurers Journal. This is essential to the playing of the game because many vital clues are inside it with a number associated. During the game you'll be referred to the numbered journal entries and also similar tavern tales and you then read the relevant paragraph. Of course there are as many bogus clues and false leads in the booklet so you can't just read them all and hope.

One thing that does slow down play though is combat. It can take a very long time to resolve a battle with more than a couple of foes and although the combat system is good compared to most you can become bored with watching it.

Curse of the Azure Bonds is a good follow up *Pool or Radiance*, but it's still mainly a hack and slay game. There are problems to be solved, but they seemed too simple and just a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Hack and slay role players will love it, but the more cerebral role players may find it lacking. If you fall into the latter category, stick with Ultima.

● Violet Staunton

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£24.99	REVIEWED
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW

CHARACTERS 72
Six characters with random attributes and many classes..

SET-UP 83
Disk needed for characters and saved games. Very easy to get going and characters from Pool of Radiance can be loaded in.

LANDSCAPE 53
Plenty of pictures. but the graphcs are chunky.

COMBAT 78
Plenty of combat options and weapons with tactical use of spells and weapons.

MAGIC 68
A goodly number of spells that cover combat. healing. and detection to make for a more interesting game.

ENCOUNTERS 54
Most encounters are hostile. but useful information can be obtained from some personalities.

RPG-UIDE RATING 764

LEISURE SUIT LARRY II

Just a quick bit of help with the boat section. Get the fruit from the table in your cabin at the stern. Read the note. Open the west side door and enter the room. Listen to woman but don't take up her offer. Leave. Change into swimsuit, rub on sunscreen oil.

Leave the cabin, go up then aft to the swimming pool. Sit on the chaise loounge and look groovy, waiting for the girl to arrive. Listen to girl, but don't go with her. Enter the pool and type swim. Swim to middle of the pool and type dive. Get bikini top from bottom of pool. Surface and leave pool. Rub on suncreen oil again then return to cabin and change clothes.

Open the door to the west side. The woman should have now left. Examine the bedise table, open drawer, and get sewing kit. Now all you have to do is visit the barber's shop, get your wig, get some spinach dip, pull the lever on the console, dump the dip and the wig over board and...and...and...and...well, we can't do EVERYTHING for you!

SPACE QUEST III

Sierra-On-Line's latest animated adventure

THE PIRATES OF PESTULON
MONOLITH BURGERS
"Such adventure! Such danger! Such wonderfully silly fun!"
- Computer Entertainer

The third game in the Space Quest series has warped its way through time and space to give you another injection of puzzling and amusement. Your old friend and mine, Roger Wilco, hero of the previous two adventures is back again to thwart the plans of evil, or more likely die trying.

Roger had some problems with his ship and was forced to get into the hybernetic sleep unit. Time and our hero awoke in the remains of his ship on a strange planet.

Meanwhile the dodgy of duo of programmers from Andromeda have disappeared mysteriously and the owners of the notorious Scumsoft organisation have been blamed. Scumsoft have made no comment, mainly because no one knows where they are, but I have a feeling that Roger will find them, he may even be on his way at this very moment.

Sierra adventures are unusual in presentation in that they have animated graphics throughout so that you can see exactly what is going on and Space Quest III is no exception. Movement is handle by clicking on the place that you want to be with the mouse pointer and Roger walks there or stops if there's something in his way like a wall or object. Keep and eye out for holes in the ground unless you want proof that man can't fly unaided.

Interaction with objects and people is accomplished by typing in commands from the keyboard as you would in any conventional adventure. All of the common commands are available including conversational commands for that essential character interaction. Pull down menus let you execute some of the more common commands like inventory. Another goodie is repeat last command which brings up the last command for editing or simply redoing the same thing again.

Sierra games are games that you either love or hate. They are very pretty and being able to see exactly what's going on is an asset, but moving around can be a bind because you can't exactly zoom from location to location, it takes time because Roger has to physically walk across the screen. Another thing that helps slow down play even more is disk access. Every new location is loaded from disk and unless you have a hard disk things become very tedious. This slowing of the game can be very off-putting a [illegible] es suffer from it.

● [illegible] unton

LANDSCAPE 87
Attractive graphics as usual from Sierra, but the action can get very slow sometimes. We understand Sierra are currently working on improving the speed of their authoring system. Thank goodness!

ENCOUNTERS..56
Puzzling, exploration, and object usage are the main cores of Sierra games – there is little scope for complex character interaction.

CHALLENGE..65
Very little that would trouble an experienced adventurer, but getting it all done will take some time.

SYSTEM 74
Sierra have moved a long way since their early games, but the animated adventure concept needs either a more powerful processor or more efficenit coding to give of its best in speed and interaction.

ACE
ADVENTURE RATING
740

Space Quest III is fun to play and watch initially, but most hard-core adventurers will find the slow pace irritating and give up. If they do, they'll miss out on some of the fun that more patient players will be having. Sierra games are ideal for beginners however as they are visually attractive and should help draw more people to the underused adventure genre.

MARS SAGA

Mars Saga is an entertaining RPG that is simple to play but great fun. Here's a bunch of tips to help you out, thanks to Brad Sprigg of Australia.

To start with, go into a bart and find a marine with lots of auto skill or rifle skill. The rifle skill tends to be more useful. Buy a good weapon and kill mosters until you have enough money and experience to go up a level in rifles, in the combat training. Keep doing this until you get a carbine.

You shouold now go to see Cybil Graves at the Primus Munitions store, where she will tell you to exchange a microdisk with the nomads outside the city to get a package that someone stole from her.

Before doing as she says, go to the police station to get a bounty notice to get Phelos Fletcher. Leave the city, and go south to the mountains. You are bound to meet some nomads, who will exchange the micro disk for a finder.

Go east to where mountains block your path east and south. You should now notice that your finder is flashing gaster. Move around a bit until the finder stays on. The EXAMINE AREA. It will tell you that you hve found a package and an entrance to a cavern. Now take this back to Cybil...and the best of luck!

USEFUL SKILLS

Some skills and objects that are hard to get hold of include: golum armour, arc gun, missile launchers, automatic guns, and battle armour.

To get Golum armour, you must go around the repair shops in Progos until someone says 'Go to the combat training centre in Parallax and say that Gecko sent you.' Upon going to the Parallax CT you will find that for 1000 credits you will be able to train in the use of Golum armour.

Also in Progos, you would have been told to ask for Derahand in a Parallax Gambling establishment. When you're there, go around all the GE's until you find the right one. There, for 10000 credits, you can buy some Golum armour which you can now use.

To get the other skills: break into the system and look at the information on the WAR GAME ROOM. This will book you in and make you a 'Member'. You can now enter the war game room and learn the skills.

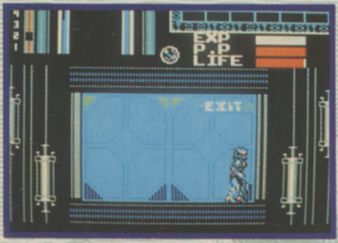
Money is also troublesome. One good way to get it is to kill monsters such as Rookies, Agents, and hunters. These drop reflect armour, mesh armour, etc. – all worth cash.

THERE IS NO OPPOSITION!

OUTRUN 3D

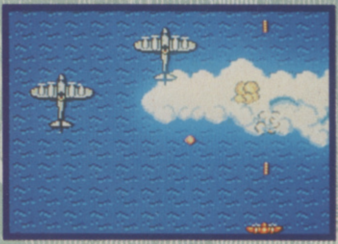
RAMPAGE

TIME SOLDIERS



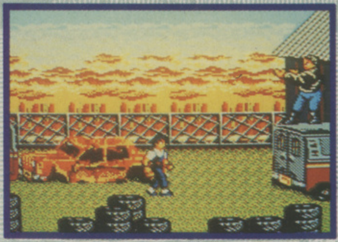
CYBORG HUNTER

ALTERED BEAST



BOMBER RAID

RASTAN



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DARING MIDI

TONY DILLON CHECKS OUT THE MIDI SIDE OF HEAVY METAL...

From Thin Lizzy to a new group called Dare, Keyboard player Darren Wharton generated quite a few MIDI codes on his ST over the last couple of years. ACE found out what the new breed of Heavy Metal bands are using to get that big, BIG sound...

Q. So Darren, what exactly do you and Brian Cox, the main keyboard player use?

'The only thing I use on stage is a custom built KX5 which the Yamaha people originally designed, but this one I actually had made for me, really because of the balance. I used to hate the shape of the KX5s, they were awkward to hold, so I had this KX5 built with the presets in the neck, where the original KX5 had them under the keyboard. If you're trying to play and sing, you had to go though all these strange contortions (mimes some very unusual positions), you know? So I've had all the presets put in the neck, and also the pitch bender, which is a lot more useful live. Obviously that's only a controller. That goes into the MJC-28, which is a MIDI patch-bay sort of thing, and from that is where Brian (Cox) comes into operation. I only control a JX-10 and a Roland S-50 Piano. To accompany that, I have various string samples at various levels preset in the JX-10. I also at times play a Yamaha DX-7, we have two of those, which we use more for 'texture' sounds, rather than lead sounds. We blend them in with the piano which gives it a nice crisp tone. We had to because even though the S-50 is a fine sampler, the piano sample is a little dull. That's basically all I play. Brian plays the JX-10 as well, manually. He uses that as his master keyboard, and from that he runs a D-50, an AKAI S-900 which we normally use to keep very breathy voice sounds which we use on tracks like 'Raindance' and 'Abandon', and that in conjunction with the Roland D-50, gives it a really plush sound. He also has a JX-8P which he uses for lead horn sounds, manually. So actually in fron of him he has the JX-10 and the JX-8P, and to his right he has the Roland S-50, a DX-7 and a Roland D-50, and at his back he has another DX-7, and thats it!'

Q. Sounds a bit of a handful! What about the computer side?

'We use them when we're recording. I must say, the best buy on the market is the Steinberg Pro-24 and the Atari ST, which is what we use. We use that in conjunction with the S-50, which holds all the drum sounds. We've got thousands of drum sounds for the S-50 on disk, and that coupled with the Steinberg is brilliant. I have used a lot of Fairlight in my time, with Thin Lizzy and with DARE, and I've found that the sequencer doesn't even compare with the Pro-24. The Steinberg can do anything you want at the touch of a button. It's so simple.'

Q. So how much has MIDI in itself helped you when recording?

'It's not that much of a boost when you're recording, except when you're creating sounds. I think that what it has done is opened a lot more creative possibilities more than convenience. It's great to be able to play three or four keyboards at once, but most keyboard players I know try to keep the number of keyboards to one or two at a time. If you start blending too many sounds together, it all gets too mushy.

We find that live we don't need to have many keyboards playing together at once anyway. Usually the only thing we use MIDI for live is to change the presets for each song. As we do have so many keyboards on stage, it's difficult for Brian to change all those manually. So, we have a system where, if we change the settings on the JX-10, it will automatically change all the others accordingly, making sure all the right sounds are in the right place and all the volumes are set. All the keyboards are balanced internally, and it saves the sound engineer an awful lot of messing around. We actually do all the field work in my little studio at home.'

Q. Are there ever times when you wish somebody would invent a specific item?

'Yes, I wish somebody would come up with a MIDI radio transmitter. It hasn't been done yet, which I find really annoying because when I carry the KX-5 portable keyboard for certain songs on stage, I have to be tied to a wire. I sing with a Samson radio mike, which is great because you're not tied to anything, and you really feel chained down when you have to put a lead on again. I wish some boffin somewhe would come up with a transmitter. It can b done, but apparently the wavelength it has t be done on falls into an area of wavelength not permitted by law.'

Q. What equipment would you recommend for a beginner who wants to get into home recording?

'First of all, you need a good multi tarck recorder. There are loads of good ones on the market. Atari, for example. Fostek do a good cheap range. The models are being upgraded all the time and the prices really vary. You can have a good home studio for a couple of hundred quid, and then go up to fifty, sixty to a hundred grand, it all depends on what the indi-vidual wants. My little system cost about five grand, and it was good enough to do demos, which got us the record deal with A&M. I would suggest that for a decent demo studio you go for a Tascam 38 for around fifteen hundred pounds, an Alan and Heath mixing desk, 16 to 8 or 16 to 16, and then of course you need your effects. And the best effects units on the market have got to be the SPX-90s by Yamaha, for both quality and versatility.'

Q. And what keyboards would you recommend?

'There's an incredible little keyboard that Roland have just brought out, called an E-10. It's a portable keyboard, great for the beginner, costs about a thousand pounds, two built in speakers and it's got some really good sampled drum sounds, string sounds, piano sounds and a reverb unit built in which gives it a real studio type sound. You know, there's nothing worse than trying to learn to something that sounds shit, you play to the sound. If you've got a nice sound, more often then not you'll play better.'

Q. Do you ever use your ST for anything else? Games?

'Nope. (Laughs) The only thing I ever played was Space Invaders, that's my video game history.'

Q. Finally, do you have any tips for home recorders who really want to make it big?

'Home recording is great, you can get great results, but to any songwriters, the main thing is the songs. Keep writing songs, as many as you can. Compare them to your favourite bands, see if they stand up. If you think they sound crap, the record company is going to think they sound crap. When you are writing songs that to you stand up to the big bands, then that's the time to start sending demos.'

And indeed it worked for Darren and co. With their debut album 'Out Of The Silence' still selling well, and another one coming 'soon', DARE look like they've got quite a career ahead of them.

Thanks go to Vicky Serene at A&M for her wonderfully efficient co-ordination, and special thanks to Darren for his time.

BEER MONEY!

BUDGET BARGAINS TO WATCH OUT FOR THIS MONTH...

Fancy getting £££ worth of software for throwaway prices? Resist the temptation to blow that £2.00 on a half-pint of Old Groper and spend it instead on one of the following premium releases, recently re-issued at budget prices.

BOMBJACK II

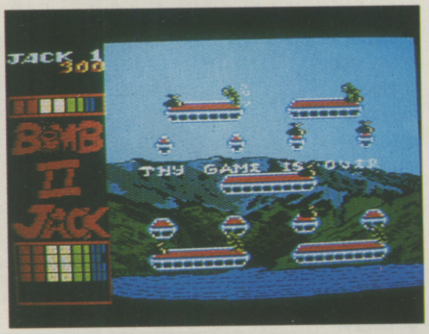
Encore £1.99 Spectrum

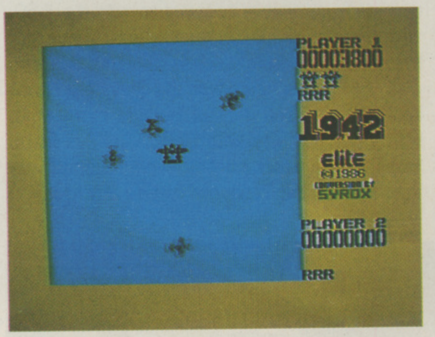
Bombjack the first was an absorbing, fun, platform style game which was well received on all formats. Bombjack II however did not go down so well.

The basic gameplay was almost the same to that of BJ, a main character who could fly between platforms. But for some reason all the graphics were reduced in size, which in turn reduced the gameplay...

Only really recommended to fans of the original arcade conversion.

2 pints





1942

Encore £1.99 Spectrum

Another arcade conversion on re-release, 1942 is a progressively scrolling vertical shoot 'em up. It's your job to pilot your plane over the Pacific ocean laying waste to all in your path. POW symbols occasionally surface after the destruction of the appropriate enemy giving you enhanced fire power when collected.

1942 spawned many arcade and home computer clones with Flying Shark being the most successful. Our advice is to stick to the original for a rollicking blast party.

4 pints

JACK THE NIPPER

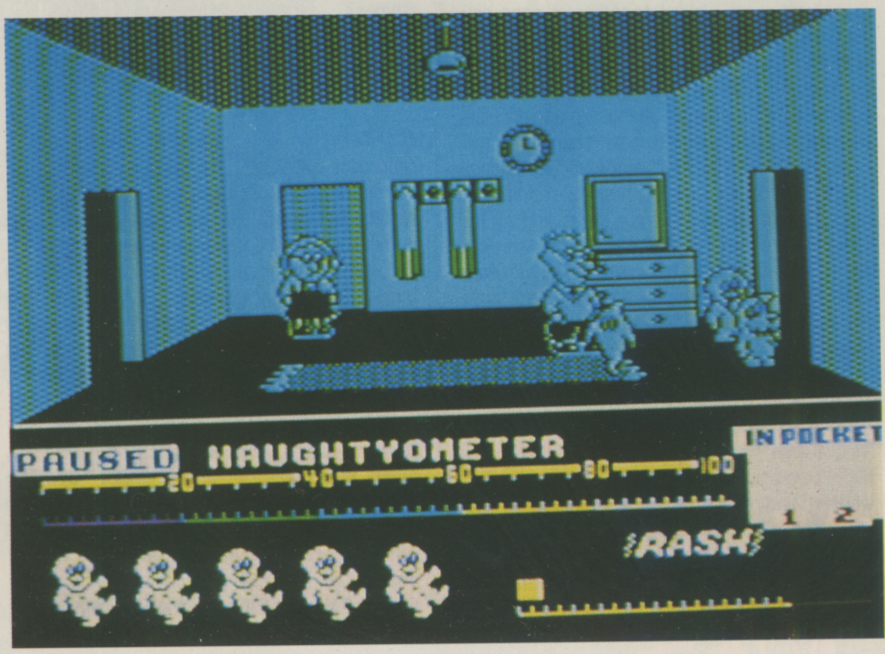
Kixx £2.99 Spectrum

Games like this prove that the Spectrum isn't just another door stop. Excellent cartoon style graphics coupled with a sadistic form of humour make the program a winner.

Little rapscallion Jack is tired of being party to a bunch of goody goody school kids. So he dons his nappy, picks up his pea shooter and takes a walk. He escapes from his house and goes out into the big wide world to try to bring as much trouble to honest folk as possible.

Whether it's causing all the machines in the laundromat to foam up or making clay aliens to scare the local playgroup, as long as it inconveniences somebody, Jack'll do it.

A fantastic game when it first appeared a couple of years ago, and still damn good now. There's never been a better excuse to waste three quid.



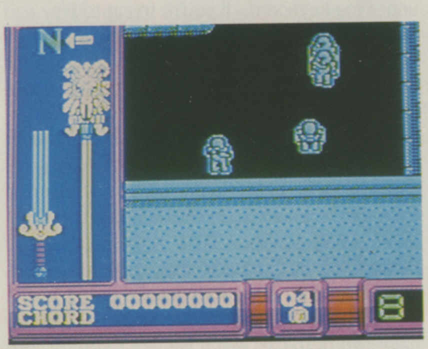
5 pints

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Kixx Spectrum £2.99

Both an arcade and adventure game were released to coincide with the Dolph Lundgren film. Both were popular in their respective fields. And it was this, the arcade version, that was first on budget.

He-man has escaped from castle Greyskulle and been transported to modern day America. To return to his world He-man has to collect eight chords to activate the musical cosmic key.



MOTU is set over six different levels providing lots of varied action, including an overhead view Gauntlet style sequence, a cross hair shoot out and stand up fight routines.

The original release wasn't too spectacular across most formats – indeed, it received (and deserved) a blistering ACE write-off. The Spectrum version was marginally more forgivable and at three quid buys some varied challenges...

3 pints

SABOTEUR II

Encore Spectrum £1.99

Another golden oldie, from the archives of Durell this time. Back in Saboteur, the Ninja had to recover a computer disk containing all the bad guys' plans. Though the mission was

PINT-AT-A-GLASS RATING SYSTEM

Here's this month's ratings guide for thirsty players:

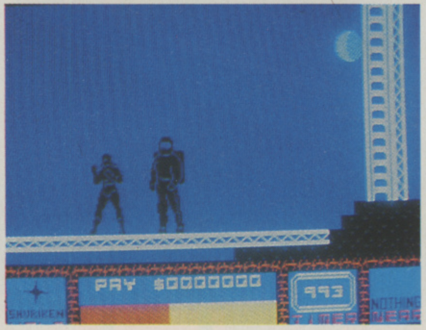
1 Pint: Completely flat

2 Pints: Sub standard, hardly merits a sip

3 Pints: Worth a pull

4 Pints: Challenges Old Groper – bag a copy if you see one

5 Pints: A mighty draught! Get this one down the hatch, or regret it for ever after



successful, the Ninja was fatally wounded. Now his Ninja sister is out for revenge.

According to the disk the main base of the baddies contains a missile silo. As good a place as any to extract revenge on her brother's killers.

Hang glide into the complex, find the ticker tape that contains the missile's flight path and redirect it. Then hop on to a motor bike and escape past the robot androids and the panthers.

700 screens-worth and a lot of addictive action make a pretty good buy.

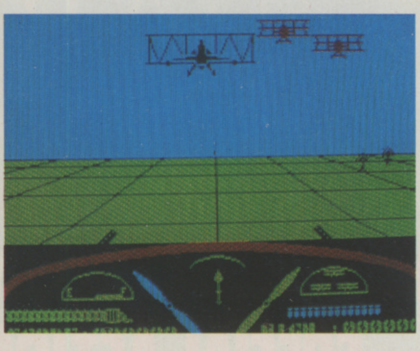
3 pints

DEEP STRIKE

Encore Amstrad £1.99

'You pilot a world war one fight, Your job is to protect a flight of bombers'. At least that's what's written on the pack.

First released in 1986 Deep Strike, if anything, seems a lot better for the price. Not so much a flight sim, more of an arcade shoot out, but fun all the same. The graphic routines are well executed with a smart scrolling routine and nice use of colour. Once again the sound could have been improved, though what there is suffices.



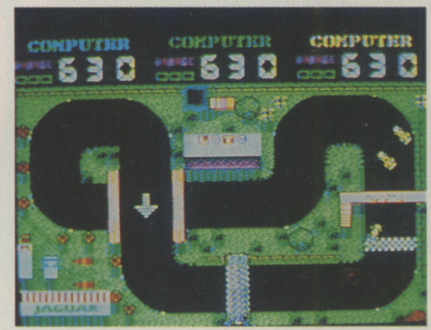
Not the world's youngest, and no way the worst, budget game. Good, if not somewhat dated.

3 pints

GRAND PRIX SIM II

Codemasters Spectrum Price £1.99

The return of the Oliver twins is heralded in this three player race game in the same format as Championship Sprint. This is one of the better clones.



Enhancements include the cars taking damage from crashes, a time carry-over feature so the quicker you finish a race the more it will benefit you next time round, and sampled speech to boot.

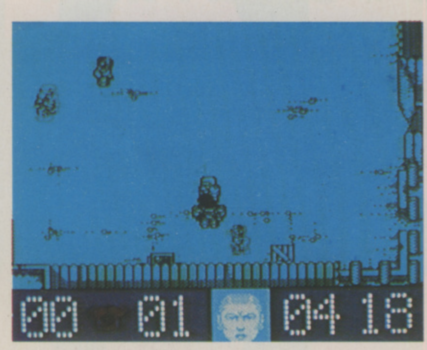
The graphics are fast and smooth. The action and the three player option enhances the game no end. Definitely a game for fans of this genre and newcomers alike.

4 pints

STREET CRED FOOTBALL

Players Premier Spectrum £1.99

With all the excitement and drama featured in the football league this year, arcade style football sims have been crawling out from software house doors all year. There's been Microprose Soccer and Kick Off to mention a couple of the better ones. Street Cred, however, is not in that league.



The game starts with you as the captain having to select a team of five players from a selection of local youth degenerates. Then take them to the nearest car park for a kick around. The moves are a mixture of uncluttered passes and shots with no frills attached.

The graphics are pretty deadpan and bland, the completely monochrome playing can be excused. Not a fantastic game in any respect.

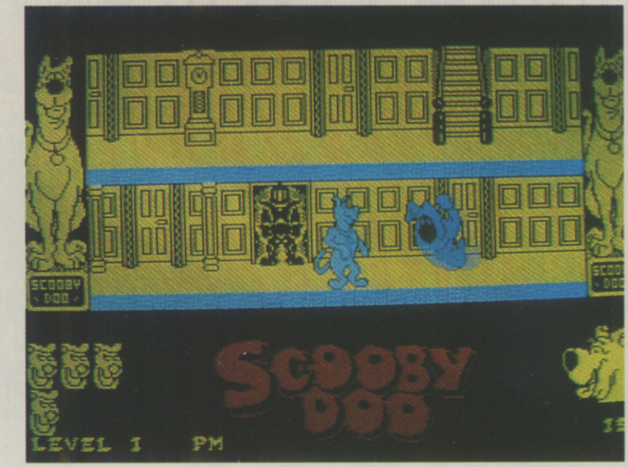
2 pints

SCOOBY DOO

Encore C64 Price £1.99

We're all kids at heart, and most of us young 'uns grew up with Scooby, Shaggy, Fred and the gang. It was an obvious excuse for a licence. Which in 1986 Gargoyle games snapped up.

Once again the Mystery Machine has pulled up outside a haunted mansion and the kids have gone in to explore. And once again something has gone wrong – everyone apart from Scooby has been captured by the ghosts. Not being a brave pooch, Scooby is reluctant to to go in after his chums. But when there's a Scooby snack riding on the case, that dog will do anything.



Fending off attacks from ghosts with a variety of kicks and punches he has to find his friends in the four levels of the mansion. The graphics really do present a cartoon style feel to this game rounding off a playable, fun game. Another must purchase.

5 pints

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IN THE PINK

THE LINE-UP

88
ACE software guide
All the games you really HAVE to feature in your collection.

100
The ACE puzzle
So you think you're smart, eh? Well, try this one, matey, and see if you can grab yourself a prize.

101
The ACE Crossword
A charmingly infuriating way to spend the afternoon.

102
The ACE Crossword
...and yet more ACE Odd Facts

104
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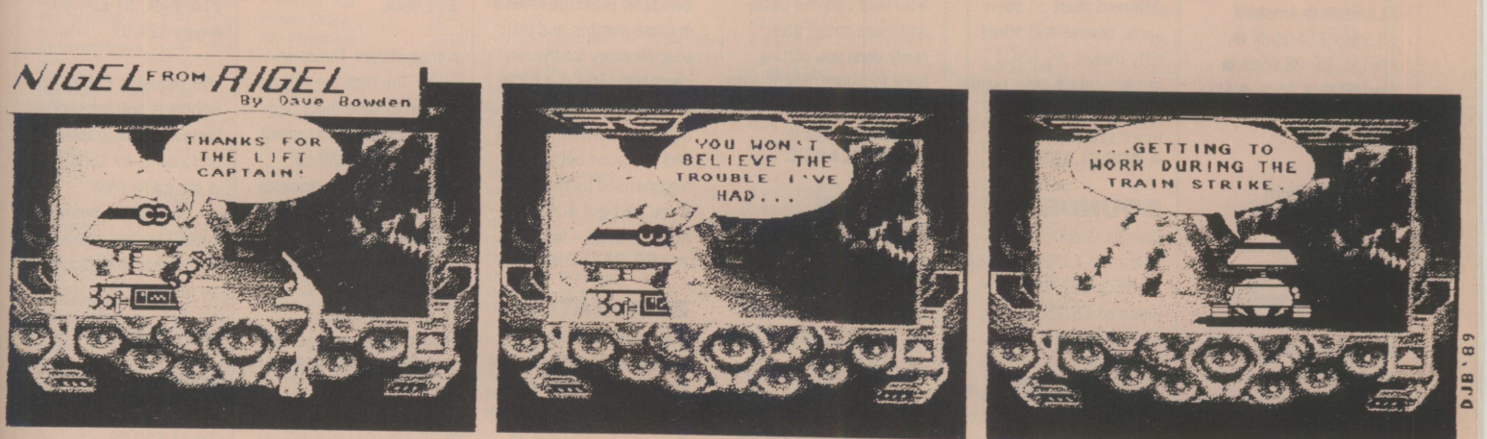
This month features the updated Games Checklist with the roll-call of essential buys. Plus the ACE Crossword, the ACE Puzzle, and your very own Readers' Ads.

Next month sees new sections in the Games Checklist, the conclusion of love in the Kitchen, and possibly...just possibly...the end of N'Gar Thrombobo.


NIGEL FROM RIGEL
By Dave Bowden
THANKS FOR THE LIFT CAPTAIN!
YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE TROUBLE I'VE HAD...
...GETTING TO WORK DURING THE TRAIN STRIKE.
DJB '89

GAMES YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE

All of the following games are ACE RATED: that means they're all red hot masterpieces of computer entertainment. Some of the games have been around a long time: these games are simply marked with the ACE CLASSIC flash, and rest assured, they're all superb pieces of software and are well deserving of the title.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fun factor and plenty of addictiveness feature here.

ARKANOID

Imagine ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari XL/XE £8.95cs ● Atari ST £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Conversion from *Arkanoid* the coin-op, in its turn the best version of the classic *Breakout*. Simple in concept: the player controls a bat at the base of the screen, whizzing it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the bat to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictiveness. As a faithful coin-op conversion, *Arkanoid* comes out top, but for a different slant on the same theme and some nifty music, try ASL's *Impact*, which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BOUNDER

Gremlin Graphics ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay aloft longer or gain a mystery bonus. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many nasties, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, witty graphics, great music – and it's so playable.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. Enormously good fun, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one player against the computer.

★ ACE RATED 958

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a tricky game to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become mesmerised by the thing. If you ain't got a 1Mb Archie though – forget it!

★ ACE RATED 931

ELIMINATOR

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.99cs £12.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Graphically wonderful roadway blast-em-up by John Phillips, which will twist your joystick inside-out. It'll even have you driving on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addiction level's so great you'll keep coming back for more.

★ ACE RATED 904

EXOLON

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you run, duck and jump your way along a planet's surface blasting away at alien defences. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an exoskeleton for extra protection and fire power.

★ ACE CLASSIC

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Ocean, Spectrum £8.99cs, C64 £9.99cs, Amstrad £9.99cs, ST £19.99, Amiga £24.99

Although pipped at the post in a head to head with Rainbow islands, New Zealand Story is not a game to be ruled out. It is immense fun to play, provides lots of varied action across many levels.

Defiantly worth checking out.

Ace Rating 875

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £19.99dk

A magnificent *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids – great stuff!

★ ACE RATED 969

PITSTOP 2

Epyx/US Gold ● Available only on Epyx Epics compilation ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk (in compilation with *Winter Games* and *Summer Games 2*)

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, tyre blow-outs and of course the all-important pitstops guarantee to give you hand cramp and your brain a real racing treat.

★ ACE CLASSIC

POWERDROME

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.95dk

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you enthralled for months to come. It may not be terribly easy to get straight into but it's well worth perservering with. You'll be playing this for months.

★ ACE RATED 925

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Exxos ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both audio and visual. The consistently good gameplay ensures you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to get the hang of, but master it and you'll be pleased you persevered.

★ ACE RATED 912

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Firebird, Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk, C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk, Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk, ST £24.99, Amiga £24.99

The sequel to Bubble Bobble is nothing short of fantastic. The graphics and sound are superb, as is the game play.

One of the best (and cutest) arcade conversions of the year that should not be missed.

Ace rating 934

RVF

Microstyle, ST £24.95, Amiga £29.95

RVF offers a near endless supply of fast paced bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider giving the bike a push

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Ace	2.99		2.99	4.99	2.99	
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Afterburner	6.99	10.99	6.99	10.99	6.99	10.99
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Barbarian 2 Palace	6.99		6.99	9.99	6.99	9.99
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Dragon Ninja	6.50	9.99	6.99	9.99	6.99	9.99
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Football Manager 1	2.99	4.99	2.99	6.99	2.99	6.50
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Fun School 2 (6 to8)	7.99	9.99	7.99	9.99	7.99	9.99
Fun School 2 (over 8)	7.99	9.99	7.99	9.99	7.99	9.99
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Last Ninja 2	8.99		8.99	9.99	8.99	10.99
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Epyx sporting simulations are of high quality but none have quite captured the playability and style of the original *Summer Games* and its immediate successor, *Summer Games 2*. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be complex so practice is recommended.
★ ACE CLASSIC

SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk Amstrad £9.99cs Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game.
★ ACE RATED 907

THRUST

Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of real-life physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean, very addictive.
★ ACE CLASSIC

URIDIUM

Hewson ● Spectrum £8.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £14.95dk

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking dreadnoughts and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent *Paradroid*.
ACE CLASSIC

ZARCH / VIRUS

Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Firebird (16 and 8-bit versions) Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Some 8-bit versions under development

STILL ACE'S highest rated game to date. A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timelessly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions . All that remains to be seen now is whether we'll be ACE rating the 8-bit versions.
★ ACE RATED 981

NEXT MONTH

Next month sees a startling new development in the ACE Pink Pages software guide. It'll be tied in with prizes for readers...but we're not revealing yet exactly what you're in for. We're confident however, that it'll set the whole games community buzzing!

We'll also be expanding the section to include console games, wargames, and a simulations category.

Meanwhile, don"t forget your entries for the ACE Diary listing – and any comments you have on the section are always welcome. These are your pages, so keep in touch!.

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ADVENTURES

Adventures have come a long way since *The Hobbit.* State-of-the-art graphics and powerful parsers enable you to communicate with other characters, and fully explore the world of your choosing. Add role-playing elements and you can see why this section of the software biz is the fastest growing area of computer entertainment.

THE BARD'S TALE III

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

The latest *Bard's Tale* game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which are still well worth taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better animated. Second, there are ranged combat routines which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's large and represents excellent value for money.

★ ACE RATED 920

BEYOND ZORK

Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● PC £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.

★ ACE RATED 902

FISH

Magnetic Scrolls ● PC £24.99dk Amiga £24.99dk

More gameplay than *Corruption*, better game design than *Jinxter*, and not as quirky as *The Pawn*. This is definitely MS's best release since *Guild Of Thieves*. Good stuff indeed.

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GUILD OF THIEVES

Rainbird ● C64 £19.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

One of Britain's newer adventure software houses – Magnetic Scrolls – managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination.

★ ACE CLASSIC

INGRID'S BACK

Level 9 ● Atari ST £19.95dk

A great follow-up to *Gnome Ranger*. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.

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JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Rainbird ● C64 £14.95cs ● Spectrum 128 £14.95cs ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● PC £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Level 9 have put together three of their classic releases, *Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure* and *Adventure Quest* in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.

★ ACE CLASSIC

LURKING HORROR

Infocom/Mediagenic ● C64 £19.99dk ● ST £24.99 I Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college laboratory. Superb text-only game that defies you to play it after dark...

★ ACE CLASSIC

POOL OF RADIANCE

US GOLD /SSI ● C64 £14.99dk

SSI were very brave to attempt tocapture the complex concept of the AD&D system on a computer, but they managed superbly. An RPG-influenced game that will appeal to not only AD&D fans but to anyone looking for an enthralling game that will keep them playing for months.

★ ACE RATED 921

TIME AND MAGIK

Mandarin ● Spectrum £14.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● PC £19.99dk

This compilation of the Level 9 games, *Lords Of Time, Red Moon* and *The Price Of Magik* have been re-vamped with better parsing, bigger vocabularies and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.

★ ACE RATED 919

ULTIMA V

OriginSystems/Microprose ● C64 £24.95dk ● PC £29.95 ● ST/Amiga to be announced

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★ ACE RATED 928

WASTELAND

Electronic Arts ● C64 £14.95dk

Charge around irradiated USA whopping mutant bunnies and biker scum in this role-playing epic. The atmosphere may not be as good as the *Bard's Tale* series of games, but the extra dimension of strategy leaves the cut, slash and spell scenario of the *BT* series way behind.

★ ACE RATED 921

ZORK ZERO

Infocom Versions due out about now. Watch this space for price info. Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant addiction. A bit more character interaction would have made this a real humdinger, but even so it remains one of the best games of the year so far.

★ ACE RATED

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large dose of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONE CRUNCHER

Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs11.95dk ● Amiga £14.95

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a boulderdahs ripoff. However there are a number of innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.

★ ACE RATED 948 – AMIGA

BOULDER-DASH

Prism Leisure Corporation ● Spectrum £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs

A game that has everything – instant addiction, lng-term challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get tat them. Boulders can drop and cause you srious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. Boulderdahs is a clasic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.

★ ACE CLASSIC

DEFLEKTOR

Gremlin/Vortex ● C64 £9.99cs ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● ST £19.95dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a number of cells that are on screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the mirrors, tibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks if you're to ahcieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive.

★ ACE RATED 906 – ST

NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99 dk● Atari ST £14.99 dk

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.

★ ACE RATED 943 - C64

SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95 cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clean brain and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.

★ ACE RATED 963 - AMIGA

SKULL DIGGERY

Nexus● Atari ST £19.95

Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes the original on this particular machine. Again (see Boulderdash above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over a hundred different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Skulldiggery scores on playability (easier screens to begin with and a choice of starting point) and its entertaining two-player option.

★ ACE RATED 919 - ST

SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of stragtegy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-priced release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for

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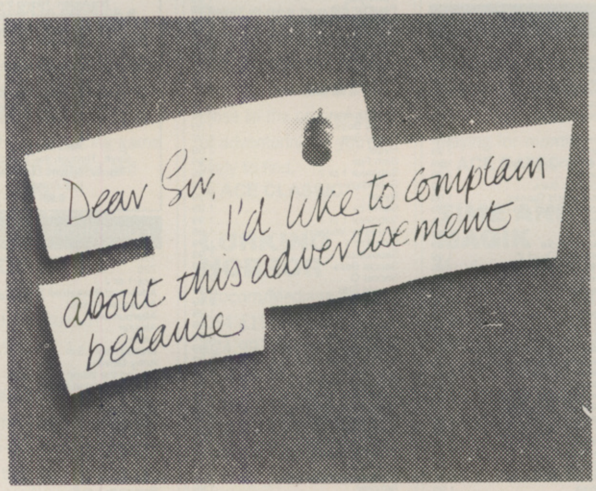
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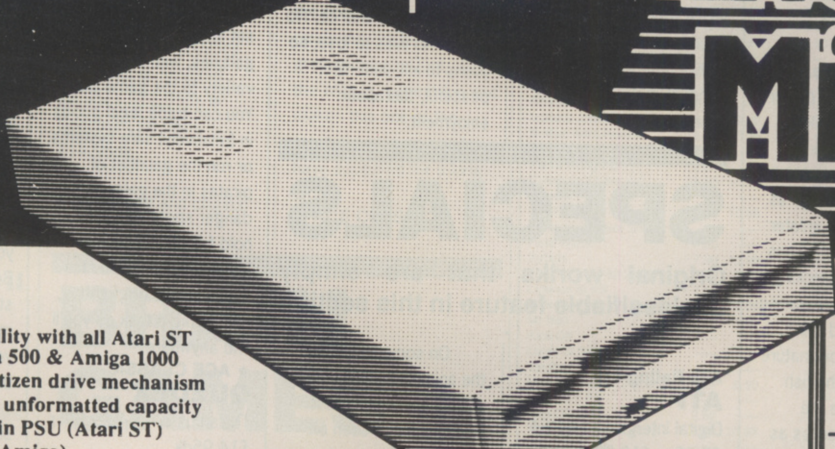

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A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.
★ ACE RATED 959 - C64

XOR

Logotron ● BBC £9.95cs £12.85dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £7.95cs

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player controlling two shields, and collecting masks through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progree. Also in later stages, fish and chickens lie in wait, often blocking the masks and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, the fish and chickens are the leaast of your worries as bombs, transporters and dolls crop up to conspire against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning to complete successfully.
★ ACE RATED 927 - SPECTRUM

ARCHI-PELAGOS

Logotron, ST £24.95, Amiga £24.95, PC £24.95

Guaranteed to be unlike anything else you have ever seen. Archipelagos is a mixture of chess, Sentinel (from Firebird) and lot of something else too.

The graphics are a visual treat as is the sound, all that along with 9,999 different world's to conquer make one hell of a game.

COSMIC OSMO

Activision, Macintosh II £99.99

Not so much a game, more of an experience. No scores no lives to lose, no aliens to kill. Just nice, peaceful, theraputic enjoyment.

SPECIALS

Original worlks that are simply unclassifiable feature in this section

Ace Rating 910

ATF

Digital Intergration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk● Spectrum £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent combat/flight simulator that's a bit of a change for Digital Intergration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.
★ ACE RATED 956 - SPECTRUM

On some locations the animation and sound effects surpass almost anything we've seen on the Amiga. An amazing piece of software.

Featured in issue 23

ELITE

Firebird ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £12.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £14.95cs ● BBC £13.95cs £14.95dk (available from Superior software)

Still the best space trading game, Elite set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the game play. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in zero-G dogfighting, and as big a task as you'll find anywhere.
★ ACE CLASSIC

QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.
★ ACE RATED 934 - C64

SIM CITY

Maxis/Broderbund, Amiga £Tba, Macintosh II £Tba

Like Populus, only better was the general comment. Create your dream city, or your ultimate slum land. Build a nuclear power station smack in the middle of a busy city sould you feel the need, then call the place Happy Valley!

Another God-like simulation and another hit.

Ace Rating 945

SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 Disk

Tremendous stuff; steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a

Megasave

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fiendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catwalks, ramps, towers and trmapolines surrounded by lethel drops - and NO safety rails. Floor switches activiate lifts and bridge gspd, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the explorations the thing.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the solid 3D treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. You've got a large taske to complete and there's plenty of Egron's to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration that stands head above the competition.

★ **ACE RATED 927 - ST**

TAU CETI/ ACADEMY

CRL ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.95

Flight simulator/shoot 'em up and its sequel which are both incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is imppeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In Academy you get to design your own space skimmer craft as well.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The third game using the Freescape system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In total eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930's trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventurers who love puzzles, the Freescape system is a godsend.

★ **ACE RATED 907 - AMSTRAD**

WIZBALL

OCEAN ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs $12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £14.95dk

A compelling and original ball game in which you become Wizball and must set out to conquer the 'colour creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. Controlling the Wizball is great fun and makes this one of the most playable games to have appeared for a long time.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

BRAIN GAMES

Fed up with mindless blasting? Want a game that offers you an opponent who's worthy of your skills? Then this is your section

CHESS MASTER 2000

Electronic Arts ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● IBM PC £24.95dk

Strongest chess game on the Amiga, with excellent graphics, 2D or 3D viewpoint, 12 levels of difficulty and all the playing options you could wish for. Plus some fairly nifty speech synthesis.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

COLOSSUS CHESS 4

CDS ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £9.95

Best bet for 8-bit machine owners, with a choice of 2D or 3D view, umpteen levels of difficulty, and a myriad options which enable you to play, watch, work out chess problems, etc against a fine computer opponent.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

INFOGRAMES' BRIDGE

Infogrames ● Amstrad £12.95cs £15.95dk ● MSX £12.95

Graphically the best of all contract bridge simulations, with large playing cards depicted against a suitably green baize background. Plays a good game (for a computer, which after all is a bit short in the imangination and flair department), and features a wide range of options and bidding conventions which you can toggle of according to your style.

★ **ACE CLASSIC**

POWERPLAY

Arcana ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

If you want totry out your general knowledge, we reckon you'd be better off with this original and challenging combination of strategy game and quiz than with the admittedly monster selling Trivial Pursuits. Powerplay is graphically very pretty in its setting on Mount Olympus, home of the Gods.

★ **ACE RATED 935 - Amiga**

SCRABBLE

Leisure Genius ● C64 £12.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 ● IBM PC £24.95dk

SThe hugely popular word game translated very successfully onto the micro. Fast, excellent display, and a suprisingly large vocabulary (even if it does include some strange looking words on some occasions). Good enough to give even

LONDON MAIL ORDER

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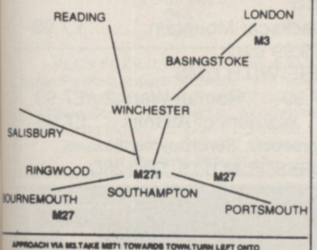

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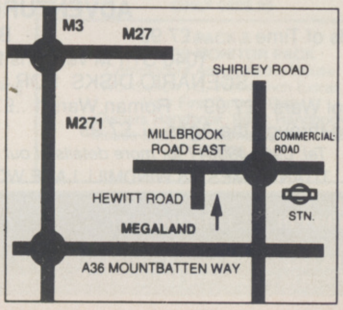

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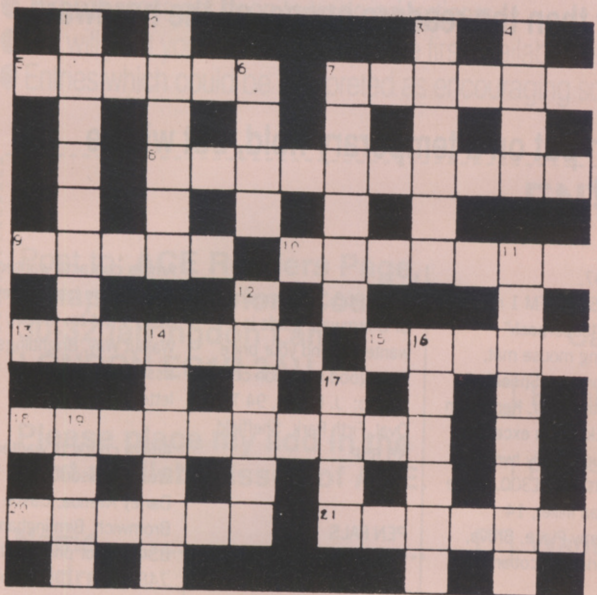

■ **Send your entries to Prize Crossword 16, ACE, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1**

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ACROSS

5. Bar Sam from Battle Tank game (6)
7. Protect the front of your monitor (6)
8. 'Shark' - title revised for addictive game (3,7)
9. Seven spoilt chances (5)
10. Intends to surround alien abjects in the heavens (7)
13. Tax rise in Gaul? (7)
15. Beat it in game from Titus (5)
19. CIA men wear disuigse to form a software house (10)
20. Courage needed to hold a pint? (6)
21. Sex Duo performing in game from Origin Sytems (6)

DOWN

1. Old boy waits and watches (8)
2. A star turn on first new game from Sega (6)
3. Nick game from Chrysalis (6)
4. A long time returning to the software house (4)
6. Stage in most epic games (4)
7. Page up and down as software company leaders get the bread (6)
11. House of the Hunter's Moon (8)
14. They happen when Steven plays (6)
16. One keeping cool in police boxing contest (6)
17. Detest game from Gremlin (4)
19. Spin a coin for the picture (4)

OH NO, IT'S THE LISTS!

Ace's top eight revolutions

1 French Revolution
(Plenty of cakes decapitation make this hit)
2 Easter Uprising (Ireland)
(Something to do with potatoes wasn't it?)
3 Russian Revolution
(Ken Livingstone's great, great,great Grandperson and co.)
4 Spanish Civil War
(Dedicated to our sandwich girl)
5 American Independence
(Not a terribly good one because they beat us.)
6 Cultural revolution
(Uncle Bob Dillon and friends)
7 Beer Revolution
(Eugene Lacey giving it up)
8 Salmon Revelation
(We're sure Steve Cooke is Rushdie's brother)

Mark Patterson's essential TV top ten

1 Sledge Hammer
2 Schimanksi Euro Detective
3 Sesame Street
4 Red Dwarf
5 Hitch Hikers Guide
6 The Fiumps
7 Italian/Swedesh/French intellectual films
8 Anything starring Slim Pickens
9 The Bill
10 Any 'B' movie

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The BLITTER END

GREEN GROSSERS

OOPS!

We thought we'd get ahead of ourselves this month and give you the Oopsies for THIS issue, before you've even seen them!

Well, not all of them, perhaps. but we can let you in on a little secret. Our contents pages went to press before the rest of the magazine, so we weren't able to tell you about the delights awaiting you on pages 84 and 85 (Premium games at Budget Prices) or on page 83 (Heavy Metal MIDI).

Of course, there may some teensy little misspellings elsewhere in the magazine. As usual, you'll point them out to us. And many thanks to Mr Bromsgrove of Worcester for the message about the full stops. We really appreciated that...Really...

With the biggest Cabinet reshuffle in years, the British Lions knocking the stuffing out of the Aussies, and the twentieth anniversary of man landing on the moon the 'greening' of the software industry seems like a minuscule event. Try saying that down in deepest Tetbury - where all things green have taken on a new importance to Microprose since they announced their Greenpeace game. The fly boy software house has seen the ecological light. Not only will the games instructions be printed on recycled paper (greenpeace insisted) but the firm have converted all their company cars to run on green petrol. Right on.

★

Meanwhile another 'greenish' campaigner - Richard Branson of the less than earth shattering litter campaign - has been giving away Interactive Video Disks about Sir Ranulph Fiennes trip to the North Pole. Jackets worn in the pic were kindly donated by the Mountain Equipment Ltd. You would have thought he could have bought his own on the kind of dosh he is on.

★

There is nothing green about the latest American company to set up stall in the UK - Accolade. The petrol in their racing sims is pretty high octane stuff too. Infact the company are offering ACE readers the chance of lifetime to get the smell of high lead content Grand Prix petrol in their nostrils at the forthcoming Spanish Grand Prix. Its a no expense spared prize for two people to so make sure you check it out on page 25.

★

Talking of mega dosh - those devil may care raconteur public school boys have been at it again. Hurray, break out the champers ,the Dom Doms are back in the Blitter End. Though this time not through the efforts of their debutante PR girl - Claire Edgely. The piccy was sent by the publishers of Hot Shot. A new video magazine in which our favourite Blitters give their views on coin-ops, playability, and the next batch of releases from Domark. Watch out Neighbours, the Dom Doms are coming in a tale of simple software folk.

★

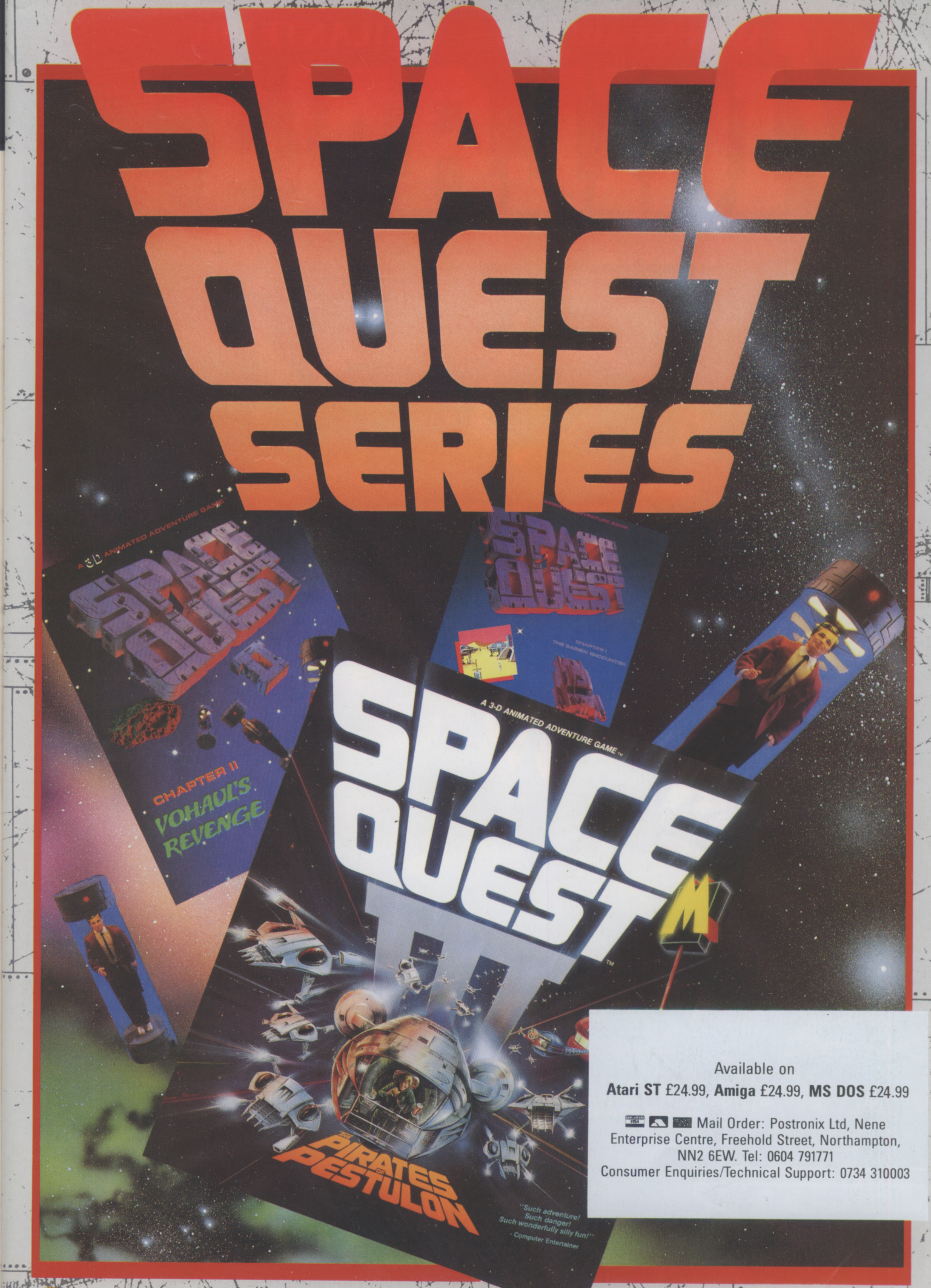
Meanwhile, much further down the social ladder , ACE'S esteemd advertisement manager - one Gary Williams, has something of a problem. He is stuck on the third level of Super Mario Land for the Nintendo Game Boy. Can anyone help out with a hint or a tip? He is driving the Blitter End up the wall.Not only has he taken to 'staying in' at lunch time to play the game, but he is becoming introverted, losing weight, and given to mumbling inanely at the tiny hand held computer "That's the kind of guy I am" over and over again.

★

Finally, let me leave you with this thought. Despite the fact that he has had to recall his latest batch of PC's because ofa problem with their hard disks Alan Sugar is still one of the richest men in the country. He has got so much dosh he could buy every single copy of this months ACE (lucky for you he didn't, huh) and still have millions of pounds left in his bank account. But what does he do? Drive off into the sunset in his Mercedes. No way. Disappear on a world cruise to forget all his problems. No way. He sticks to his guns and prepares his company to weather the storm. Its grit like that that has made the computer industry the vibrant and exciting world that it is. Stand up Alan Sugar you win the Blitter End's very first - Good Guy of the Month Award.

ARISE SIR APCES..ER..LYNX

ATARI's boss breezed into the UK last month to attend British Grand Prix and announce that the Atari Portable Colour Entertainment System will now be called the Lynx. Blitter is mightily relieved at this shorter name. APCES was such a mouthful. The only bad thing about this name is it does bring back memories of certain 'epoch making' computer of the same name that was distinguished by having achieved sales of under double figures. In fact Steve Cook is the only person Blitter knows who owns one. 'Tremendous graphics,' he says, 'I still hack about with it in my spare time.' We weren't absolutely sure whether he was joking or not. ***Blit-blit!***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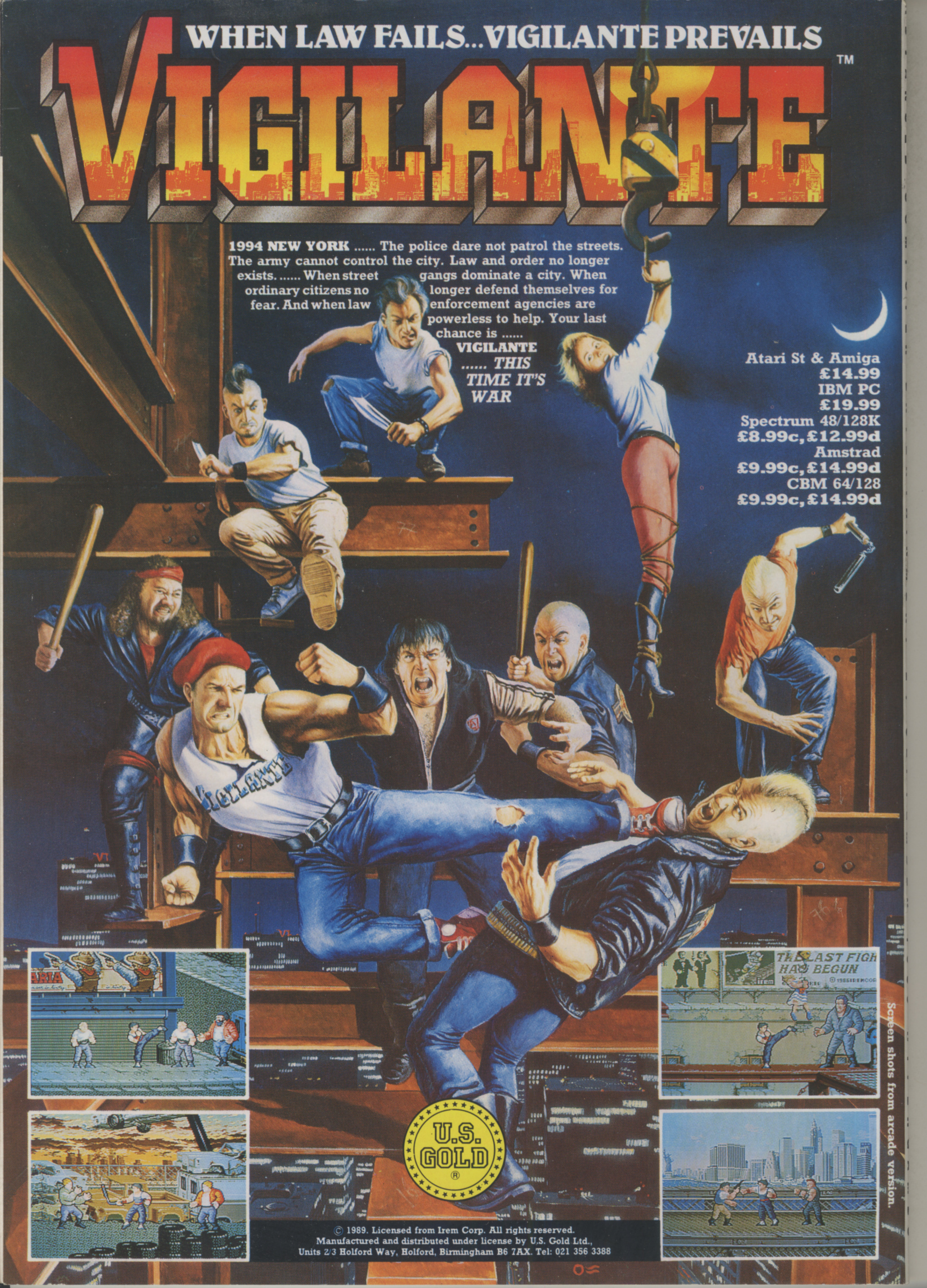
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